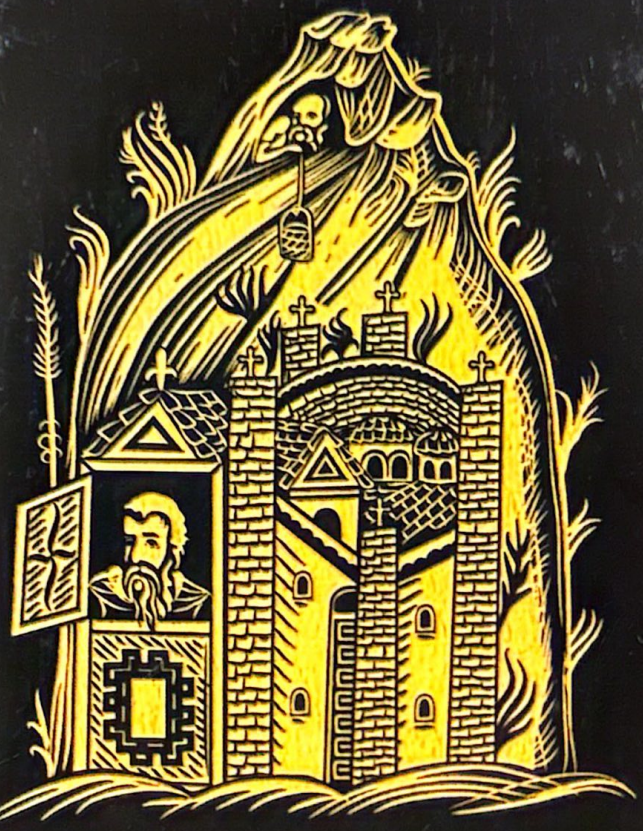
THE EVERGETINOS

A Complete Text



CENTER FOR TRADITIONALIST
ORTHODOX STUDIES

THE EVERGETINOS

«Τίς φθονερώτερος τοῦ κεκτημένου βιβλίον ὠφέλιμον, καὶ
μὴ μεταδιδόντος τῷ ἀδελφῷ πρὸς οἰκοδομήν;»

τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἐφραίμ

THE EVERGETINOS

A COMPLETE TEXT
Book III

CHIEF EDITORS AND TRANSLATORS

Archbishop Chrysostomos
Hieromonk Patapios

ASSISTED BY

Bishop Ambrose
Bishop Auxentios
Monk Chrysostomos
Constantine Kokenes
Nun Lydia
John V. Petropoulos
† John E. Rexine
Reverend Gregory Telepneff

CENTER FOR TRADITIONALIST
ORTHODOX STUDIES
2008

Note: All Psalms and other Old Testamental and Deutero-Canonical citations in the four books of *The Evergetinos* are according to the *Septuaginta* (LXX) and its numbering system. Designations of Scriptural quotations by chapter and verse in the original Greek text are set off in parentheses. When quotations do not include such designations, but are provided by the translators, they are set off in brackets.

Book III

ISBN 978-0-911165-7-39 (hardcover)
ISBN 978-0-911165-7-77 (paperback)

•

Complete Set

ISBN 978-0-911165-7-91 (hardcover)
ISBN 978-0-911165-8-07 (paperback)

Library of Congress Control Number
2008932586

© 2008 by
CENTER FOR TRADITIONALIST
ORTHODOX STUDIES
All rights reserved

About the Editors and Translators

Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna is a Senior Scholar at the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies. He completed his graduate studies in Byzantine history at the University of California and in psychology at Princeton University, where he received his doctoral degree. He is former Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Associate Professor of Psychology at Ashland University, Visiting Lecturer in Eastern Christian Thought at the Ashland Theological Seminary, Visiting Professor of the Psychology of Religion and Patristics at the Theological Institute of Uppsala University in Sweden, and, as a Fulbright Scholar in Romania, Lecturer in Byzantine History at the University of Bucharest, Visiting Professor of Business Ethics and Consumer Behavior at the Alexandru I. Cuza University of Jassey (Iaşi), and Visiting Professor of the Theology of Orthodox Ecclesiastical Art and Architecture at the Ion Mincu University in Bucharest.

His Eminence has also been a Visiting Scholar at the Harvard Divinity School, Oxford University, the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, and the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington. In 2006, he was appointed the David B. Larson Fellow in Health and Spirituality by the John W. Kluge Center at the U.S. Library of Congress.

Hieromonk Patapios is Academic Director of the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies. He completed his undergraduate studies at Queens' College, Cambridge University, and his graduate schooling at Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh, and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, where he received his doctoral degree in Patristics and where he was a Newhall Teaching Fellow. He is former Lecturer in Sacred Languages at the St. Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological College in Berkeley, California.

Father Patapios has published numerous scholarly studies in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, and *Eastern Churches Journal*. He is also the co-author, with Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna, of *Manna from Athos: The Issue of Frequent Communion on the Holy Mountain in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006) and the author of *Resistance or Exclusion?* (Etna, CA: C.T.O.S., 2000).

•

Bishop Ambrose of Methone received his undergraduate and graduate education at the University of London. He is a brother of the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina in Phyle (Athens), Greece, and Director of Missions for the Orthodox Church of Greece, Holy Synod in Resistance. His Grace is the author of a number of theological articles and studies and, together with Arch-

bishop Chrysostomos of Etna and Bishop Auxentios of Photike, wrote *The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece*, published by the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies in 1985 and reprinted in 1994.

Bishop Auxentios of Photike is Director of the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies. A Princeton University graduate, he received his doctoral degree in Liturgics at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. His theological and liturgical studies have appeared in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, *Kleronomia*, *The American Benedictine Review*, and *Diakonia*, and he has co-authored, with Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna, *Contemporary Eastern Orthodox Thought: The Traditionalist Voice* (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishers, 1982) and *Scripture and Tradition* (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishers, 1982). He is also the author of *The Paschal Fire in Jerusalem: A Study of the Rite of the Holy Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, which has appeared in English (Berkeley, CA: St. John Chrysostom Press, 1993; reprinted 1999) and in Romanian (Sibiu: Editura Deisis [Collectia Liturgica], 1993, reprinted 2003). His Grace is editor of the journal *Orthodox Tradition*.

Monk Chrysostomos received his Diploma in Theology at the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies. He is a brother of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Etna, California.

Constantine Kokenes received his Doctor of Medicine degree at Duke University. He is an affiliate of the DeKalb Medical Center in Decatur, Georgia.

Nun Lydia received her undergraduate education at Augustana College and is a sister of the Convent of the Holy Angels in Aphidnai (Athens), Greece.

John V. Petropoulos received his doctoral degree in Classics at Oxford University. He is Associate Professor of Ancient Greek Literature at the Democritean University of Thrace and Chairman of the Board and Fellow in Hellenic Civilization, Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University, Nafplion, Greece.

† *John E. Rexine* completed his graduate and undergraduate studies at Harvard University, where he received his doctorate in Classics. At the time of his death (1993), he was Charles A. Dana Professor of the Classics and Acting Dean of the Faculty *Emeritus* at Colgate University.

Reverend Gregory Telepneff is a Senior Scholar at the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies. A Yale University graduate, he received his doctorate in Patristics at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. He is Pastor of the St. John Chrysostomos Church in Saugus (Boston), Massachusetts, and teaches Theology and Religious Studies on an adjunct basis at Anna Maria College. He is at present a Visiting Scholar at the Harvard Divinity School. Father Gregory is the author of a number of scholarly studies and a groundbreaking historical work on early Irish monasticism, *The Egyptian Desert in the Irish Bogs: The Byzantine Character of Early Celtic Monasticism* (Etna, CA: C.T.O.S., 2001).

Acknowledgements

The Editors would like to acknowledge several individuals whose suggestions, advice, and direct aid made the publication of this work possible: the late Reverend Dr. N. Michael Vaporis, former Dean of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Dr. Constantine Cavarnos, President of the Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, and the late Reverend Dr. Henri Nouwen, former Professor of Divinity at the Harvard Divinity School. For their technical support and arduous labor in preparing and formatting the publication, we owe a note of special gratitude to Hieromonk Father Gregory and Monk Vlasie, brothers of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Etna, California. We are likewise indebted to Presbytera Juliana Cownie, Presbytera Mary Zubricky, and the sisterhood of the Convent of St. Elizabeth the Grand Duchess of Russia, in Etna, California, for their indefatigable work in proofreading the text.

Dedication

For Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle,
our ever-present guide in the desert and
our intercessory Abba in the City.

•

«Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν Θεόν, ἀγγελικὸν βίον βιοῖ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς νηστεύων καὶ ἀγρυπνῶν, καὶ ψάλλων καὶ προσευχόμενος, καὶ περὶ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου ἀεὶ καλὰ λογιζόμενος».

τοῦ Ἁγίου Μαξίμου

Table of Contents

Book Three

Hypothesis I 1

That one should not condemn anyone on the basis of suspicions or, in general, give any credence to suspicions.

Hypothesis II 9

That one should not condemn or denigrate even one who sins openly, but should be attentive to himself and not busy himself with other people's affairs; for he who attends to his own vices is incapable of condemning his neighbor.

Hypothesis III 33

That one should not cause scandal through deeds performed without a blessing; what the term "scandal" means; that one should not be scandalized; and that one should heal those who are scandalized.

Hypothesis IV 38

That the Christian should take his every thought into captivity and offer it to Christ; for spiritual people, and certain lay people, draw positive lessons even from most disgraceful circumstances.

Hypothesis V 42

Concerning craftiness and guile, simplicity and guilelessness; whence they are engendered; what sort of harm and benefit we derive from them; and concerning envy.

Hypothesis VI 45

That those who despise and deride unpretentious and self-abasing people sin very gravely.

Hypothesis VII 48

That the believer should do what he does with a good, and not with a bad, conscience; for God judges the deeds of each man, not according to appearance, but according to the intention of the doer.

Hypothesis VIII 51

That the conscience is a great gift of God to us and is very beneficial to him who listens to it.

Hypothesis IX 53

That we should always be attentive and guard ourselves on all

sides, since the Enemy assails us from all sides and through every means.

Hypothesis X 66

That we should examine ourselves, so as to correct our mistakes and increase our good deeds.

Hypothesis XI 69

That for a faithful Christian it is hazardous to transgress even a single commandment, since he has received from God the ability to fulfill them all; and that a small evil is very harmful.

Hypothesis XII 81

That monastics and devout lay people who have received Divine knowledge are subjected to great chastisements even for minor sins.

Hypothesis XIII 85

That we must courageously resist listlessness and demonic dejection, and concerning patience.

Hypothesis XIV 103

That the ascetic struggler, even when he is physically ill, should have no desire whatsoever for pleasures or relax his discipline, or place any hope of a cure in medical treatment, but in God, by Whose dispensation illnesses also come to us.

Hypothesis XV 113

How and when we should seek medical treatment and what kind of treatment; that the monk should not leave his monastery for bodily healing, but should persevere there even if he is ill, being content with the care provided by his brothers.

Hypothesis XVI 118

That a monk should not bathe or strip completely naked unless compelled by necessity.

Hypothesis XVII 127

That there is nothing undetermined by God; all that happens, even sudden death, has been ordained by Divine Providence.

Hypothesis XVIII 129

Concerning patience amid illnesses and the benefit to be derived therefrom, and that God brings providential chastisements upon certain virtuous persons for their perfect purification.

Hypothesis XIX 138

That the righteous are often permitted to die a violent death for some beneficial purpose.

Hypothesis XX 146

That we should not be surprised when some misfortune befalls

righteous men.
Hypothesis XXI 153
That the Christian, even when deprived of life's necessities for his own benefit, should not straightforward become fainthearted, but should give thanks to the Lord and wait on Him and hope without hesitation that God, in His goodness, will unfailingly provide for him. As well, that it is shameful for an ascetic, who is a servant of God, to associate with worldly people and to ask for what he needs, even if he is burdened by indigence.
Hypothesis XXII 165
Concerning that hope in Christ which is imprudent.
Hypothesis XXIII 168
That one should violate not even the least commandment on account of bodily necessity, no matter how pressing it may be, or on account of human fear.
Hypothesis XXIV 172
That a believer, even if he falls into the tumult of secular life, should not conform to external circumstances, but should look to God and do what is pleasing to Him.
Hypothesis XXV 176
He who seeks to please God must reckon as nothing the dishonors or honors that come from men.
Hypothesis XXVI 179
That one must strive for virtue in secret, without display or boasting; and concerning vainglory and pleasing men, and whence vainglory is engendered, what evils it brings about, and how it is destroyed.
Hypothesis XXVII 195
That we should not pursue friendships with people who are prominent in the world.
Hypothesis XXVIII 201
That we should not, on account of feelings of self-conceit, do more than the other brethren of the monastery.
Hypothesis XXIX 206
That pride alone is sufficient to destroy a Christian, and that those who become puffed up over their accomplishments are abandoned by Divine Grace and suffer a deadly fall.
Hypothesis XXX 221
Whence blasphemy is engendered and how it is cured.
Hypothesis XXXI 228
The greatest among the virtues is discretion; the believer must act

in all that he does with discretion. For what is done aimlessly, without discretion, even if it may be good, is not beneficial and can even be harmful.

Hypothesis XXXII 242

That without help from on high, the ascetic struggler can neither be delivered from vice nor acquire virtue, and that adoption into sonship does not come about from deeds, but from Divine Grace.

Hypothesis XXXIII 246

What is the cause of temptations and tribulations, what is the benefit thereof, and what are their different kinds.

Hypothesis XXXIV 263

How we should withstand temptations; that we should not expose ourselves to them; those circumstances in which we should avoid or endure a temptation.

Hypothesis XXXV 275

That one who is able to work miracles should not have recourse to miracle-working, but decline it out of humility; likewise, that we should not aspire to, or ask for, other spiritual gifts. That, even if we are vouchsafed them, we should not be high-minded, but guard ourselves through humility; that those who exhibit a Godly way of life are in no way inferior to those who work miracles; and that there are other spiritual gifts, superior to that of miracle-working, whereby spiritual men are known.

Hypothesis XXXVI 286

That love is the greatest of all the virtues and that he who loves his neighbor, as God wills, in all circumstances puts the benefit and comfort of his neighbor before his own interests.

Hypothesis XXXVII 299

That we ought to lay down even our life for our neighbor.

Hypothesis XXXVIII 306

That he who has love and humility in the Lord strives not to grieve his neighbor, but serves him in every way, considering his needs and difficulties as his own.

Hypothesis XXXIX 319

He who loves his neighbor, as God wills, is his neighbor's benefactor without the latter ever knowing it.

Hypothesis XL 325

A pious man, whenever he sells or buys something, or engages in similar actions, should have God before his eyes and not occasion to cause harm to his neighbor, even if the latter should say that he has not suffered harm. As well, the young should be upright and

not easily succumb to boldness. In the *cœnobion*, they should not establish cliques, for these are deleterious.

Hypothesis XLI 333

How we should act towards visitors and how we should receive and speak with them.

Hypothesis XLII 340

During the visits of Godly brothers, many of the Fathers, to refresh their visitors, mildly relaxed their asceticism, without being harmed thereby, since they were dispassionate; some of them would later chastise themselves for this small relaxation. He who maintains his asceticism during visits and consolatory encounters, or relaxes it somewhat, is worthy of praise from those who judge correctly; but we should not give credence to those who compel themselves more than necessary in consolatory encounters.

Hypothesis XLIII 348

That one should not casually allow visitors to a *cœnobion*, even if they are monks, to converse or associate with the brothers; and how the brothers in a *cœnobion* should behave towards visitors.

Hypothesis XLIV 352

That we should not eat with irreligious people; and as for those who ask us questions and do not put our advice into practice, we should avoid them after the first or second meeting.

Hypothesis XLV 355

Now, regarding those who visit places away from home, how they should behave, how they should walk, and how they should act when accompanying brothers.

Hypothesis XLVI 360

That we must not turn away empty-handed anyone who approaches us for the purpose of obtaining alms, but must receive him kindly as one sent by God and share with him what we have; and that even if he is importunate, we must imitate God by forbearing with him and not getting angry. That God often recompenses many times over those who give alms. How and by whom alms should be distributed in cœnobitic monasteries.

Hypothesis XLVII 384

That a monk should not possess money on the pretext of almsgiving or accept offerings for this purpose; and what sort of almsgiving befits a monk.

Hypothesis XLVIII 396

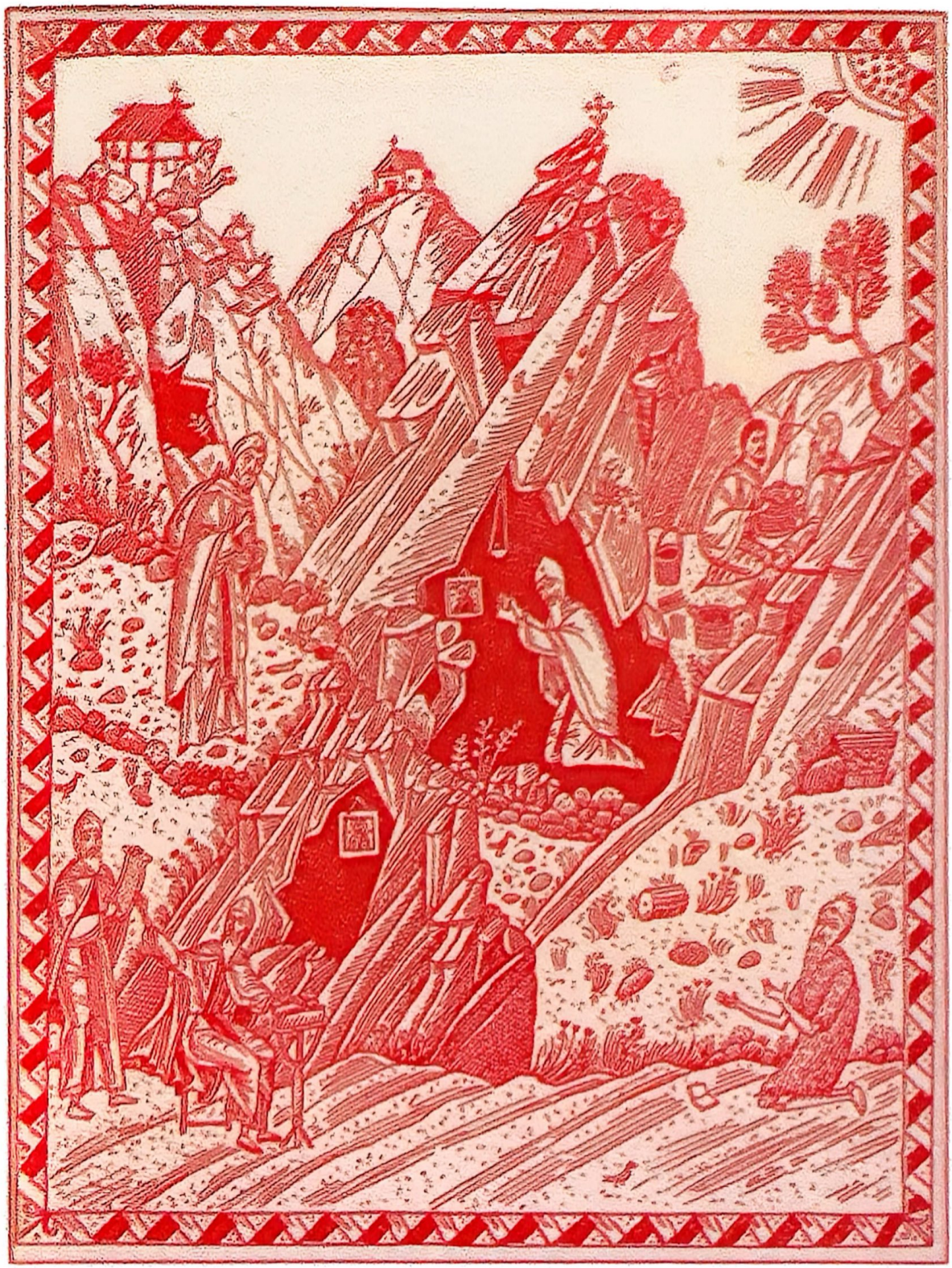
That oftentimes those who are poor and give alms to the best of their ability, and who subsequently acquire money, are overcome

by avarice and cease the almsgiving that they previously did.
Hypothesis XLIX 403
That a monk should not receive indiscriminately from any person; nor should he take more than he needs. And that he who receives alms ought to labor (in prayer and fasting) for the sake of those who give them.
Hypothesis L 410
That we should stay away from those things that do not concern us, or which belong to others, as being ruinous.

Glossary of General Terms in Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Christianity 415
Index of Selected Names in Book III 421
Index of Selected Subjects in Book III 425

The Honorable Forerunner

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist (St. Matthew 11:11). Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (St. Matthew 3:2). Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance (St. Matthew 3:8).



The Life of the Ascetic Fathers

They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy). They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

Hebrews 11:37–38

Hypothesis I

That one should not condemn anyone on the basis of suspicions or, in general, give any credence to suspicions.

A. From the Life of St. John the Merciful

1. At that time, a certain monk was going around Alexandria with an attractive girl in tow. A number of Church people saw him dragging this girl around with him and denounced him to the Blessed John for allegedly giving scandal to many by keeping company with her. Led on by their words and supposing that they were motivated by Divine zeal to make this accusation, the Patriarch ordered that the monk and the girl be severely thrashed and then confined in separate dungeons.

After the order had been carried out and the monk and the girl had been imprisoned, the monk appeared by night to the Patriarch in a dream, showing him the wounds on his back and saying to him with simplicity and guilelessness: "All right then, do these wounds please you, Master? Believe me, at least this one time even you have been deceived as a man." As soon as he awoke from sleep, St. John had the monk released from custody and sent for him, though on account of his many wounds the monk was scarcely able to walk. The Saint looked at him closely and recognized him as the monk whom he had seen in his sleep.

Wishing to find out whether the monk had in fact received as many wounds as he bore during his appearance in the dream, the Patriarch ordered him to uncover his back, after covering his loins with a towel. But when, by Divine Providence, the towel came undone and his private parts were exposed, everyone saw that he was a eunuch, although, on account of his youth, he had previously not been able to avoid every suspicion.* The Patriarch immediately removed the monk's accusers from their ecclesiastical offices, suspending them for three years. He offered a fitting apology to the God-loving monk and asked his forgiveness for the sin that he had committed against him in ignorance. "But," he told the monk, "I cannot approve of the fact that, since you are a monk and appear so young, you go around cities indiscreetly with a woman in tow, thereby scandalizing many people."

The monk replied, with due respect and humility: "Blessed be the

Lord, Master; I assure you that I am not lying. Not many days previously, I was in Gaza, and while I was on my way from there to venerate Sts. Kyros and John, this girl met me towards evening. She fell at my feet, begging me to let her accompany me, since she wanted to become a Christian (for she was a Jew). Fearing the condemnation of God, Who has commanded us not to despise any of His little ones (*cf.* St. Matthew 18:10), I listened to her plea and allowed her to accompany me. Moreover, I was confident that, given my physical condition, it would not be easy for the Enemy to tempt me. After arriving there—that is, at the Church of the Holy Unmercenaries—and fulfilling my vow, I catechized her in the Christian Faith. Ever since then, in simplicity of heart, I have kept her with me, supporting her by begging alms. I am eager to settle her, if possible, in a convent."

After hearing this story, the blessed Patriarch exclaimed in astonishment: "My goodness! How many hidden servants of God there are, even though they remain unknown to us!" He immediately offered the monk one hundred *nomismata* as a gift. But the latter declined to accept it, replying: "If a monk has faith, he has no need of money; if he loves money at all, he is bereft of faith." After saying this, he kissed the Patriarch's hand and departed.

2. Then the Patriarch advised those who were with him to avoid altogether making accusations against monastics, and he recalled an admirable remark made by the ever-memorable Emperor, St. Constantine, who rejected accusations which had been lodged against certain Bishops at the First Œcumenical Synod of Nicæa, saying: "If I came across a Bishop or a monk committing fornication, I would take off my royal mantle and place it over him, lest anyone should see him sinning." And the Patriarch continued: "He knew well that the flaws of such people (monks and Bishops), when disclosed to the masses, not only bring into disrepute ecclesiastical offices which are worthy of honor and respect but, as well, become a great incentive and pretext for those seeking to justify their own vices through such bad examples." Henceforth, keeping the case of the eunuch monk vividly before the eyes of his soul, the admirable Patriarch John paid no heed to the slanders against Vitalios the Great.

And what happened to Vitalios?

This Vitalios was previously a monk in the monastery of Abba Serídos. Leaving his monastery, he went to Alexandria, where he lived in a way which, though it made him an easy target for slander, was nonethe-

less very pleasing to God, as events ultimately proved.

When Elder Vitalios arrived in Alexandria, he was already over sixty years old. He worked assiduously to draw up a list of all the prostitutes in the city's brothels. In the meantime, he took up paid employment, for which he agreed to a wage of twelve *oboloi* [see endnotes for Hypothesis II, "*litra*," Book II] per day. He used one *obolos* to purchase lupines (a legume), which he would eat after sunset. He would also go each night to one of the prostitutes on his list to give her the rest of his money, saying: "Take this money and please, for my sake, keep yourself unstained by sin tonight." He would stand the whole night long in a corner of the room where the woman plied her trade, reciting Psalms without interruption, making prostrations, and stretching out his hands in supplication to God for her sake until daybreak, at which time he would depart, adjuring the woman not to divulge this deed to anyone.

However, one of the women in question had the audacity to despise the oath that she had sworn and to reveal the Elder's secret deeds. At his prayers, she was immediately possessed by a demon, in order that none of the other women would dare, thereafter, to disclose anything of his life. The Elder had only one goal in mind: to save the souls of these sinful women. As for people who wagged their tongues against him, he prayed that God would forgive them the sin of slander. His habit became the occasion for the salvation of many; for when these women saw the Elder's all-night vigils, his unceasing chanting of the Psalter, and his constant prayer that they would repent, they were moved by this to desist from their shameful acts and become concerned about chastity. Some of them contracted lawful marriages, others remained as they were, but abandoned their evil profession, while others completely renounced the world, choosing to enter the monastic life. At any rate, as long as he was alive, no one had any idea of his secret and God-pleasing way of life.

On one occasion, as he was leaving the room of the leading prostitute in the city, he ran into a licentious man, who was entering the same establishment with the intention of paying her to sin with him. The man was angry at the Elder, supposedly out of disgust for him, and struck him a blow on the neck, with all of his might, saying: "When will you stop committing these foul acts, you mocker of Christ?" The Elder replied: "Wretched man, you are going be struck with a blow so loud and so painful that practically the whole of Alexandria will gather at the sound of your cries."

After some time, this man of God departed to the Lord. He was liv-

ing in a rural area called Helioupolis, in a tiny cell which he had built for himself. He had, there, a small Chapel, provided by his neighbors, in which he frequently celebrated the Divine services.

Vitalios died without anyone knowing about it. At the very time of his repose, a demon in the form of an ugly Ethiopian appeared to that depraved man who had slapped him. The Ethiopian struck this man so heavily and loudly on the cheeks that the noise could be heard some distance away; and he said to the man: "Take this blow, which the monk Vitalios has sent you, as he foretold." At once the hapless man became demonized and began to roll around, and almost all of the inhabitants of Alexandria rushed to see, just as the Saint had foretold. The man, regaining consciousness after some time, rended his clothing and, rising, ran quickly to the Saint's cell, crying out: "Have mercy on me, O servant of God Vitalios, for I have sinned greatly against God and against you."

In the meantime, a goodly crowd ran after him. When they arrived outside the Elder's dwelling, in front of everyone the demon threw the man down, convulsed him, and then left him. On seeing this, some of the bystanders went into the Elder's cell and found the Saint on his knees, having committed his soul to God while at prayer. Then, stooping down to the ground, they observed that he had written the following words there: "People of Alexandria, 'judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come'" (I Corinthians 4:5). The demonized man then confessed before everyone both what he had done to the righteous man and the prophetic words that he had heard from the latter, which had just now been fulfilled in him.

The Patriarch was immediately informed about all of these events. He arrived on the scene, accompanied by all of his clergy. When he had read the writing on the ground, he exclaimed after a short while: "If I had given any credence to the words of the slanderers, that loud blow would have struck my own person." A whole multitude of former prostitutes, whom Vitalios had led to repentance, then assembled for the funeral of his precious body, on which they placed sweet spices, carrying it in procession with tapers, fervently lamenting having been deprived of that teaching which used to flow from him to their great benefit. They recounted his life, how he had never entered their rooms with any evil intent, and how none of them had ever seen him even touching one of the women with his hands, let alone sleeping beside her.

In response to those who reproached them for keeping silent about his virtues and thereby causing scandal to many, the women brought up, in their defense, the injunction which he had laid on them, relating

the incident of the woman who had disobeyed him and been tormented by a demon for her chastisement. As for the man who had struck the Saint and was in turn struck by the Ethiopian, he never ceased, thereafter, from visiting the tomb of the Blessed Vitalios—which proved to be a treasury of many miracles—and commemorating him, according to the custom, by the recitation of the Psalter. A few years later, he was tonsured a monk at the monastery of Abba Seridos and entrusted with the cell of St. Vitalios, on account of his great faith in him. He lived in silence there until his death.

Patriarch John gave great thanks to God for not allowing him to say or think anything unworthy of that blessed and ever-memorable soul, while many inhabitants of Alexandria, who were all too ready to condemn others, mended their ways and unlearned this wicked habit. The Patriarch told some of them: "Brethren, you should guard against being quick to condemn; for once, when I was reading the life of one of the great Fathers, I came across the following very beneficial story. This is how it goes:

3. "Two monks arrived in the city of Tyre to perform some errand. As one of them was passing by a certain place, a harlot named Porphyria followed him, crying: 'Honorable Father, save me, as Jesus Christ saved the harlot.' Without regard to people's suspicions, he took her by the hand, in full view of many, and departed with her through the middle of the city. A rumor was immediately spread abroad that the monk in question had taken Porphyria as his wife. As Porphyria passed through cities and villages with him, she happened to come across an abandoned infant, which she lovingly took up and carried with her in order to rear it.

"A little later on, some Tyrians came to the place where the monk and the erstwhile prostitute were dwelling. When they saw that Porphyria had a child in her arms, they began to laugh and jeer at that courageous man, saying to Porphyria: 'You truly succeeded in your purpose; you have borne a beautiful child by this monk!' Upon returning to Tyre, they put a rumor out everywhere that Porphyria had given birth to a child by the monk, to whom it bore an amazing resemblance.

"People are always ready to give credence to suspicions, and especially when such people are corrupt and wicked and can thus find grounds within themselves for believing such suspicions. They assume without further ado that other people are just like themselves and readily slander other individuals, both because they take pleasure in such

suspicions and slanders and, as well, because they wish to have others as accomplices in evil, so eager are they to evade the reproaches of their own consciences.

"That honorable monk tonsured Porphyria a nun and clothed her in the monastic *schema*, changing her name to 'Pelagia' and entrusting her to a convent, that she might lead the monastic life. However, after some time, having foreknowledge of the day of his death, he took her along with him, and they returned to Tyre, accompanied by the child, who was now about seven years old.

"It was immediately bandied around that Porphyria and her 'husband,' the monk, had returned to the city. When the monk subsequently fell ill and was at the point of death, a great many of the inhabitants came to visit him. Under the eyes of all he ordered a censer full of lighted coals to be brought to him. Taking the censer, he poured the coals onto his chest and said, within the hearing of all: 'Blessed be the Lord, Who of old preserved the bush unconsumed. May He be my witness that just as the caustic power of this fire is not burning my clothes, so also I have never touched a woman in all my life.'

"When they heard this, they were all astounded and glorified God, Who, through such miracles, is wont to glorify openly those who serve Him secretly.

"After doing and saying these things, the monk commended his soul into the hands of God. For this reason, my spiritual children, I urge you all, as I said before, not to be quick to condemn, but to guard yourselves as much as possible from this sin."

B. From Abba Isaiah

Brother, if you wish to obtain something that you need, do not grumble against your brother, thinking, "Why did it not occur to him to give it to me of his own accord?" but say to him with candor and simplicity: "Do me a favor and give me this item, because I need it." This is what holy purity of heart is; for if you do not say what you want, but grumble against your brother and reproach him in your heart, you are the one at fault.

C. From St. Maximos

One who busies himself with the sins of others or who condemns his brother out of suspicion has not yet begun to repent and does not seek

to know his own sins, which are, in truth, heavier than a quantity of lead weighing many talents; nor does he realize why it is that a man becomes slow of heart, loving vanity and questing after falsehood (*cf.* Psalm 4:3). For this reason, as one foolish and walking in darkness, he disregards his own sins and becomes preoccupied in his imagination with the sins of others, whether they really have occurred or he merely suspects that they have.

D. From the *Gerontikon*

1. A certain brother, who trusted his suspicions and was beset by the demon of fornication, went to an Elder and said to him: "Those two brothers are sinning with each other." The Elder realized that the demons were mocking him. Wishing to reprove him, he sent for and summoned the brothers who were being slandered. When they arrived, he looked after them. And when night fell, he spread out a rush mat for the two brothers, covering them both with a single blanket, saying: "The children of God are holy." After calling for his disciple, he ordered him to fetch the brother who had spoken against the two monks in question and to shut him up in a nearby cell. "He himself has this very passion in his soul," said the Elder, "and this is why he entertains the same thoughts about others."

2. Abba Poimen said: "It is written: 'Bear witness to what thine eyes have seen' (*cf.* Proverbs 25:7). But I tell you, even if you examine something by your own hands, do not bear witness; for a certain brother made a fool of himself, in just this way, by harboring evil suspicions against one of his brothers. One day he saw him sinning with a woman—as he supposed. Perturbed and exceedingly agitated by this, he went and prodded them with his foot, saying: 'Stop now; how much longer will you carry on like this?' Well, lo and behold, what he found were two bundles of wheat, one on top of the other. This is why I told you that, even if you examine something with your hands, you should not be quick to reprove."

3. An Elder said: "Do not make any accusation against your brother in your heart about anything whatsoever."

* The point of this sentence emerges more clearly from the Life of St. John by Leontios of Neapolis: "[A]nd everyone saw that he was a eunuch, which, on account of his youth (his lack of a beard), had not (previously) been evident to anyone" (*Vie de Syméon*

le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre, ed. A.-J. Festugière and L. Rydén, in *Bibliothèque archéologique et historique* [Paris: Geuthner, 1974], Vol. XCV, p. 374)—*Trans.*

Hypothesis II

That one should not condemn or denigrate even one who sins openly, but should be attentive to himself and not busy himself with other people's affairs; for he who attends to his own vices is incapable of condemning his neighbor.

A. From the Life of St. John the Merciful

A certain young man, driven by licentious impulses, was once going about the city of Alexandria. After seducing a virgin who had decided to embrace the monastic life, and making her the object of his wanton enjoyment, he eloped with her shortly thereafter to Byzantium. On learning of this incident, the Divine John became sorely distressed, and—as the proverb has it—he left no stone unturned in his zealous concern to raise them up as soon as possible from their fall.

After some time had passed, as the Blessed one was recounting a soul-profiting story to one of his clergy, he happened to cite the case of that young man who had been sowing his wild oats. When some of those present heard this, they condemned and denounced the young man as if with a single tongue, asserting that this sinful relationship had brought about the perdition not only of those two souls, but also of many others, for whom it had become a bad example.

Chiding them for their readiness to condemn, the Blessed John said: "Do not talk this way, my blessed children; do not be so quick to arouse your tongue to accuse your neighbor, for in so doing you are liable to fall into two evils: the first evil is to transgress the commandment of Him Who bade us not condemn anyone prematurely and Who also said, 'With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged' (St. Matthew 7:2); and the second evil is that, without knowing this young man's current situation, you very readily appoint yourselves his judges, when it is altogether uncertain whether he and the girl are persisting in their sin, or whether they have corrected themselves. For this reason, I exhort you to leave judgment of your neighbor to God, Who knows all things; for it sometimes happens that we know about the sin of one who has committed fornication or fallen into some other transgression, since it was done openly, but are unaware of the repentance which he has performed

in secret, such that he whom we condemn as a fornicator has been justified by God and is now living prudently."

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba John the Short said: "There is no greater virtue than that of not disparaging others."

2. A brother asked Abba Joseph: "What am I to do, since I can neither endure hardship nor can I work and give alms?" The Elder replied to him: "If you cannot do even one of these things, at least guard your conscience from thinking any evil of your neighbor, or denigrating him, and you will be saved."

3. A brother asked Abba Poimen: "How can a man avoid condemning his neighbor?" The Elder responded: "We and our brothers are dual images: whenever a man is attentive to himself and reproaches himself, he finds his brother to be virtuous; but when he thinks that he himself is good, he finds his brother to be evil in his sight."

4. Another brother asked the same Elder: "I am troubled and want to leave the place where I live." The Elder said to him: "What you have heard about your neighbor is not true." "Yes, it is, Father," answered the brother, "the brother who informed me is trustworthy." "No, my child," the Elder replied, "he is not trustworthy; for, if he were trustworthy, he would not have told you these things. If God, when He heard the cry of the men of Sodom, did not believe until He had seen with His own eyes, neither should we ever believe what we are told." The brother said: "I also saw this brother sinning with my own eyes."

On hearing this, the Elder looked down at the ground and, taking a small wisp of straw, asked the brother: "What is this?" "It is a wisp of straw," replied the brother. The Elder then looked up at the roof of his cell and (pointing to a beam) asked: "What is that?" "It is a beam," the brother responded. The Elder said to him: "Believe in your heart that your brother's sins are as this small wisp, while your own are as this beam. If you pay attention to your own sins, you will not think at all about his sins."

5. The same Elder said that a brother asked Abba Moses: "How does a man deaden himself towards his neighbor?" The Elder answered: "If

a man does not reflect in his heart that he has already spent three years in the tomb, he will not attain to this state."

6. Two brothers once went to Abba Pambo, and one of them asked him: "Abba, I fast for two days in succession, and on the third day I eat two small loaves of bread. Am I saving myself or going astray?" The other asked: "Abba, I earn two *keratia** a day from my handiwork. I keep a few small coins for my food, and the rest I give as alms. Am I saving myself or going astray?" The Elder did not respond to them, although they pleaded much with him. After four days, having achieved nothing, they decided to leave. But the clergy consoled them, saying: "Do not be distressed, brothers. God will reward you. It is the Elder's custom not to speak readily, unless God first tells him what to say."

The brothers then went to the Elder's cell and said to him: "Abba, pray for us." The Elder asked them: "Do you want to leave?" "Yes," they answered. Then, pondering on the works of those two brothers, he said to himself, as he scratched on the ground: "If Pambo fasts for two successive days and on the third day eats two small loaves, does he thereby become a monk? Not yet." And again he asked himself: "If Pambo works and earns two *keratia*, and gives them away as alms, does he thereby become a monk? Not as yet."

He then said to the brothers: "Your works are good, but if you guard your conscience from any anger or other evils towards your neighbor, this is how you will attain to salvation." The brothers departed, full of joy over what they had been told.

7. The blessed Synkletike said: "Let him who stands beware, lest he fall (*cf.* I Corinthians 10:12). He who has fallen has one concern: to get up again. But he who stands should constantly be on guard, lest he fall; for there is a variety of transgressions into which one may fall. He who has fallen is temporarily deprived of the possibility of standing—though if he remains lying where he is, he does not suffer great harm. Let him who stands not despise one who has fallen, but let him fear for himself, lest he fall into a deeper pit and be completely destroyed. For, it is likely that the depth of the pit will muffle and conceal any cry for help, so that he will be unable to seek assistance, as the great David says: 'Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me' (Psalm 68:16). He who has fallen before you remains where he is; beware lest, should you fall, you become food for the noetic beasts. He who has fallen does not guard the

door of his soul; as for you, do not be at all drowsy, but always chant to yourself the Divine saying: 'Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep unto death' (Psalm 12:4)."**

8. On seeing someone sinning, a holy man wept bitterly and said: "He has fallen today, and I will surely fall tomorrow; he will assuredly repent, but as for myself, I am not sure if I will repent."

C. From Antiochos (author of the *Pandects*)

Condemnation of one's neighbor is the worst of all the passions; for not only does it render the one who condemns liable to the severest punishment, since he usurps God's prerogative as Judge and becomes, so to speak, a rival of God, but the condemner, by stripping himself of the protection and help of God on account of his condemnation, also opens himself up to falling into that very sin for which he condemns his neighbor. He who is condemned, if he is not resentful towards the one who has condemned him, mitigates the gravity of the sin which elicited his condemnation. But he who condemns takes upon himself the burden of the sin of the one whom he condemns, as the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee very clearly shows us.

D. From Abba Isaiah

1. "If a man who engages in many ascetic labors sees someone wholly in a state of sin or negligence and denigrates him, all of his repentance is in vain, since he has rejected a member of the Body of Christ by judging him, by not leaving judgment to the Divine Judge, and by not attending to his own sins. For in the present life, we are all, as it were, in a doctor's waiting room: one person is suffering from a disease of the eyes, another has a pain in his hand, another has an abscess, or whatever other illnesses there may be. Some of these wounds have already been healed; but when one who has been healed of them eats something harmful, then he suffers a relapse.

"Such is the case also with one who is in a state of repentance and who judges or despises another: he undoes his repentance. Now, if a number of people are in a waiting room, each with a different ailment, and one of them cries out from his own suffering, is someone else going to ask him: 'Why are you crying out?' Is not each person concerned with his own malady? If I had the pain of my own sins before me, I would not

be able to see anyone else sinning. Each person in the waiting room is keeping watch over himself, in accordance with the doctor's instructions, by not eating anything detrimental to his wounded condition. *Who is there who is not wounded?*

2. "No one who has sinned after Holy Baptism can afford to be negligent, since he is subject to repentance. Even if he performs great miracles and healings, raises the dead, and possesses all knowledge (I Corinthians 13:2), as long as he has sinned, he cannot be free from care, since he is subject to repentance. What is meant by 'he has sinned'? Either that he has fallen into bodily fornication (whether according to or contrary to nature), or has looked passionately with his eyes at another's body, or has stolen, or has been enticed into some other sin, or has tasted something secretly, looking around to see whether someone caught him in the act, or, when someone else has put down his sheepskin cloak, has been curious to find out what is inside it. Whoever does these things insults Jesus."

From among those listening [to Abba Isaiah—*Trans.*], someone asked: "Father, is there anyone who observes such exactitude?" The Elder then replied: "Just as he who opens a hole in a wall and steals money from it has been conquered by the Enemy, so also is it with one who does not observe exactitude; for the Devil conquers both the former and the latter. He who is overcome in small sins will be overcome also in greater ones."

3. If you see your brother sinning, do not disparage him, lest you fall into the hands of your enemies. Be on your guard against deriding anyone for his appearance, for thereby you harm your own soul.

4. God revealed to the Holy Apostle Peter that he should not consider any man common or unclean (Acts 10:28); insofar as his heart is sanctified, the whole man is sanctified. In the eyes of one whose heart is possessed by the passions, no man is sanctified, because he judges every man according to the passions in his own heart. Such a man immediately flies into a rage if someone says to him: "Such and such a man is good." As for you, my beloved, beware of reproaching anyone, not only in word, but even in thought.

5. If you are beset by the thought of denigrating your brother, remember that it is on this account that God will deliver you into the

hands of your enemies. Fighting this thought, you will be at peace. Be assured that a man who reproaches his brother is far from the mercy of God.

E. From Abba Mark

1. Brother, when you hear about the transgression of Adam and Eve, you should believe that it was indeed committed by them in their day; however, you should also see that it is now committed spiritually by you and me. For, having been regenerated through Holy Baptism and been placed in the Paradise of the Church, we have transgressed the commandment of Him Who regenerated us. For the Lord enjoined us to love all of our brethren of the same Faith and to regard the fruit that comes from all as good, and eat thereof with patience, as Scripture says: "Of every tree in Paradise thou mayest freely eat" (Genesis 2:16). But we, led astray by the thoughts which the serpent puts in us, regard some of our brethren as good and love them, but regard others as bad and detest them. It is precisely this distinction between good and bad that is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; that is to say, we do not put up with our neighbor's mistakes, but ensnare each person by his shortcomings. Those who seem good we love, but those whom we consider bad we hate.

When the mind tastes the fruits of this tree,*** it immediately falls into those same mistakes that it condemned, thereafter realizing its own nakedness through the malicious discovery of a brother's faults. It did not previously perceive this nakedness, because it was veiled by brotherly empathy. As a result of this denudation, our rational faculty becomes deadened, not because God made death, but because man hated his neighbor. For "God made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living" (Wisdom of Solomon 1:13); nor is He moved by the passion of anger; nor does He devise anything for the purpose of taking revenge on it; nor does He alter His disposition according the worth of each man; but He created all things in wisdom (*cf.* Psalm 103:24) and determined that they should be regulated by spiritual laws. For this reason, He did not say to Adam, "On whatsoever day ye eat of it, I will kill you," but, issuing a warning to him, He announced the law of Divine justice in advance: "On whatsoever day ye eat of it, ye shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17). In this way, He linked good with reward and evil with chastisement, in such a way that reward would naturally correspond to virtue and chastisement to evil, without His having to rein-

vent it in each case, as certain people, in their ignorance of the spiritual law, suppose.

2. We who know this law in part ought to recognize that, should we abhor any of our brothers of the same Faith as being evil, we will be abhorred by God as being evil ourselves; likewise, if we reject anyone as a sinner unworthy of repentance, we will be rejected by God as being sinners unworthy of repentance; and if we do not forgive our neighbor his sins, God will not forgive us our sins.

3. In revealing this law, Christ, as the Lawgiver, said: "Judge not, lest ye be judged, and condemn not, lest ye be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (*cf.* St. Luke 6:37). Being aware of this law, the Apostle Paul said: "He who judgeth another condemneth himself" (*cf.* Romans 2:1). Likewise, the Prophet-King David said: "Thou shalt render unto each man according to his works" (Psalm 61:13). Another Prophet, as a representative of God, said: "Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Hebrews 10:30; *cf.* Deuteronomy 32:35). To put it simply, all of Scripture, both in the Old and the New Testaments, clearly indicates this law to us, in order that, by understanding that it is spiritual and that it pertains to the inner man, we might be zealous in all circumstances to honor this law and love our brothers—not only outwardly, but also inwardly—since this law is not like the Mosaic Law, which judged only things that were done openly; rather, as a spiritual law, it also rebukes men's secret thoughts. Moreover, with this spiritual law, the Lord fulfilled the Mosaic Law, as He Himself said: "I am not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it" (St. Matthew 5:17).

4. There is one goal that we must pursue at every time and in every place: to rejoice and not be grieved when, in various ways, we are wronged by men. We should rejoice not merely for the sake of rejoicing—or aimlessly—but because we are given the opportunity to forgive the one who grieved us, so that we, too, might receive remission of sins from God. This forbearance constitutes true knowledge of God, and such knowledge embraces everything that a man needs to know; it enables us to be heard by God whenever we entreat Him. This knowledge is the fruit of prayer. Through it, the faith that we have towards Christ is made manifest, for thereby do we acquire the capacity to love God with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves. In order to acquire

this knowledge of God, we must entreat God with vigils and bodily hardships, that our inward parts and our hearts might be opened to receive it and not drive it away. For, when we acquire this virtue and the Grace of sonship which is secretly granted through Holy Baptism, we will perceive it working in us, not obscurely, but with every assurance and inner feeling, because we are able to forgive our neighbor his sins. There are two vices that impede this virtue: bodily pleasure and vainglory. We must first renounce these vices in our minds, and then shall we be free to acquire the virtue in question.

5. When we give ourselves over to these vices, let us not consider anyone else responsible, neither Satan nor other people, but let us war against our will and not become prideful. This warfare is *civil*—internal and between our thoughts—and no one, apart from our inner man, will be able to fight with us in this conflict. We have one sole ally: Christ, Who, after Baptism, is unfathomably and mystically hidden within us. He, the invincible and infallible One, will fight with us in this civil war, if we fulfill His commandments as much as possible. These two vices that war against us deceived Eve and led Adam astray.

6. Bodily pleasure presented the tree as good for food and beautiful for the knowledge of things, while vainglory spurred them on with the thought that they would be as gods, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:5). Just as the first-formed humans, Adam and Eve, were ashamed at seeing each other naked, so also, when we cast off the innocence of our spiritual eyes and see our souls naked, our consciences will make us feel ashamed. And so we will sew together fig-leaves, that is, we will attempt to hide our spiritual nakedness with words, thoughts, gestures, and justifications. Then the Lord will fashion for us clothing made of skins and say, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (St. Luke 21:19); and He will add the following exhortation: "He who finds his life—that is, in rancor or in some other sin—will lose it; but he who loses it here on earth—that is, crucifies it—will find it in eternal life" (*cf.* St. Matthew 10:39).

7. He who has some spiritual gift, yet sympathizes with those who do not have it, preserves this gift by virtue of his compassion; but if he is haughty about it, he will lose it, since he is buffeted by the temptation of boasting.

8. Busy yourself with your own faults, and not with other people's, and the workshop of your mind will not be despoiled.

F. From St. Anastasios the Sinaite

Question

How can we avoid judging one who sins openly?

Answer

By remembering the words of the Lord, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned" (St. Luke 6:37), and those of the Apostle, who exhorts us thus, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12), and again, "Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself" (Romans 2:1). For no one knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man that dwells in him, as the Savior said (*cf.* I Corinthians 2:11).

Many people who sin frequently in the sight of others, and then confess in secret to God, have been forgiven by Him and, being well-pleasing to Him, have received the Holy Spirit. Those whom we reckon to be sinners (of whose repentance we are unaware) are justified in the sight of God. This is because we see the sins which they have committed, yet we know nothing of the good deeds which they have performed in secret. Hence, we should not condemn anyone, even if we perceive him sinning with our very eyes.

For as soon as the sinner has taken ten steps away from us, we are not in a position to know what he has done in secret or what God has done for him. Towards the evening of Great Thursday, Judas the betrayer was with Christ and the Disciples, whereas the thief was in the company of malefactors and murderers. But when Friday came, Judas departed for the outer darkness, because he had betrayed the Lord, whereas the thief, because he repented on the Cross, went to dwell in Paradise with Christ.

In view of such sudden changes, it is good not to judge a man until Christ comes, for He knows the mind of men and reveals the secrets of our hearts. For the Father has given all judgment to the Son, and so he who judges his neighbor usurps the office of the Lord; such a person is an antichrist. Moreover, there are some who receive remission of sins through various temptations, of which we know nothing. Others are

cleansed through bodily infirmity and lengthy illness. "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death" (Psalm 117:18).

The Apostle says: "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Corinthians 11:32). This he did in the case of the man who fell into fornication, allowing him to be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, in order that the spirit might be saved on the Day of Judgment (I Corinthians 5:5). From this we learn that even demoniacs, if they endure their ordeal with thanksgiving, are saved through chastisement. Others, like King Ezekias (Isaiah 38:1-22), have implored God with fervent tears when at death's door and have obtained mercy.

Others have secretly made pacts with God and performed acts of repentance, and, after departing from this life, have been saved within a few days. For, in whatever state a man is found, be it good or bad, in that state is he judged, as God declared through the Prophet Ezekiel: "If a man commit all injustices, but turn aside from them and doeth righteousness, I will not remember his iniquities; for in whatever state I find him, therein will I judge him."

There are some who have received remission of sins through righteous men. For the Lord will do the will of those who fear Him, as Holy Scripture attests (Psalm 144:19). After he made the golden calf for Israel in Horeb, Aaron was forgiven through the prayers of Moses (Exodus 32:1-35). Likewise, his sister Mariam was cleansed of leprosy when Moses pleaded with God on her behalf (Numbers 12:13-15). As well, Nabuchodonosor obtained mercy from God through the prayers of the Prophet Daniel (Daniel 4:33-37).

Oftentimes, the Holy Angels, as the true servants of God, who have great boldness before Him and who have in no way sinned against Him, make requests of Him, one for the salvation of this man, another for the salvation of that man, and God grants their petitions—He Who is worshipped by them and to Whom they plead night and day—just as earthly kings, when entreated by their sincere friends, sometimes pardon men who have been sentenced to death. For the Holy Angels are exceedingly charitable and sympathetic to mankind, since they were deemed worthy of beholding God the Word when He assumed our flesh, as they had desired from all eternity. The Chief Apostles Peter and Paul bear witness to this. Peter says that God has bestowed upon us good things, "which things the Angels desire to look into" (I St. Peter 1:12); that is, to see God as clearly as we did, before the Angels, when He

became incarnate. Paul exclaims, concerning the Ascension: Now is Christ ascended to be seen "by the principalities and powers in heavenly places through the Church" (Ephesians 3:10). For this reason, the Holy Angels have very great love for mankind, and so the Lord says: "There is joy and feasting in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (*cf.* St. Luke 15:7). Hence, to each of the faithful, when he is baptized, an Angel is given by God as a guardian, guide, and teacher. The Lord says to the Jews: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in Heaven their Angels do always behold the face of My Father Which is in Heaven" (St. Matthew 18:10).

Wherefore, if the Angel appointed by God to guard a man sees that the man to whom he has been entrusted loves the good and compels himself, as far as possible, to do it, he coöperates with him, pleading on his behalf with God, Who loves mankind, and beseeching Him to grant him salvation and remission of sins; and God fulfills his request. For if righteous men, as I said, by beseeching God have often saved sinners, are not the Holy Angels even more able to do this?

Let us, therefore, not condemn a man, even if we see him sinning openly; but let us, rather, admonish him with humility and pray for him. If what I have said is not sufficient to confirm this, let me add some other points.

Tell me, my beloved, who, if he had seen Raab the harlot openly fornicating in Jericho, would believe that God forgave her all her sins and justified her, since she gave harbor to the spies of Israel (Joshua 2:1-7; 6:22-25; Hebrews 11:31; St. James 2:25)? Or that the Publican, that rapacious and unjust man who prayed with the Pharisee in the Temple, propitiated God through a single sigh and went down to his house justified (St. Luke 18:10-14)? Or that Sampson, who killed himself (Judges 16:28-30), is among the Saints, as Paul testifies (Hebrews 11:32)? Or who would think that Manasses, who worshipped idols for fifty-two years and caused the entire people of Israel to transgress and apostatize from God, obtained forgiveness in one hour through a short prayer, as Scripture recounts (II Chronicles 33:1-20; the "Prayer of Manasses")? The King of Assyria shut Manasses up in the bronze likeness of an animal. During this confinement, he prayed to God in his own words; by Divine power, the bronze container was split open and, as the writers of history relate, an Angel of the Lord conveyed Manasses back to Jerusalem, where he lived thenceforth in repentance. And, passing over examples from the Old Testament, I will cite the case of the holy thief on the cross and bring my discourse to a close. Now, if the mystery of his

repentance had been accomplished in secret, would any man on earth be able to believe it? For that abominable man, who had robbed many and had killed both young and old, both the just and the unjust, and had also instructed others in his iniquitous life of brigandage, was justified through a single word at the end of his life, and went to dwell in Paradise before everyone else.

It is not in vain that I have recounted these points at such length, and I have done so knowing that the tongues of many people are sharper than any two-edged sword in condemning the faults of others. Even if they see innumerable good points in a man, they nonetheless notice some human deficiency in him—for no one is without sin, save God alone—and, neglecting and overlooking all of his accomplishments, constantly harp on that one small deficiency and noise it abroad among other people. The chastisement of God will come upon them as they deserve, not only on account of their own sins, but also because, through condemnation and slander, they have brought harm and destruction on others.

G. From St. Maximos

One should not shudder, be stupefied, or be astonished in his mind, when he reflects that God the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son (St. John 5:22). The Son exclaims: "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (St. Matthew 7:1). St. Paul says likewise: "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come" (I Corinthians 4:5); and: "Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself" (Romans 2:1). Leaving aside their own sins, men have usurped the judgment that belongs to the Son and they condemn their fellow men! Heaven is astounded at this, and the earth quakes (Jeremiah 2:12), but they are insensible and unabashed.

H. From the *Gerontikon*

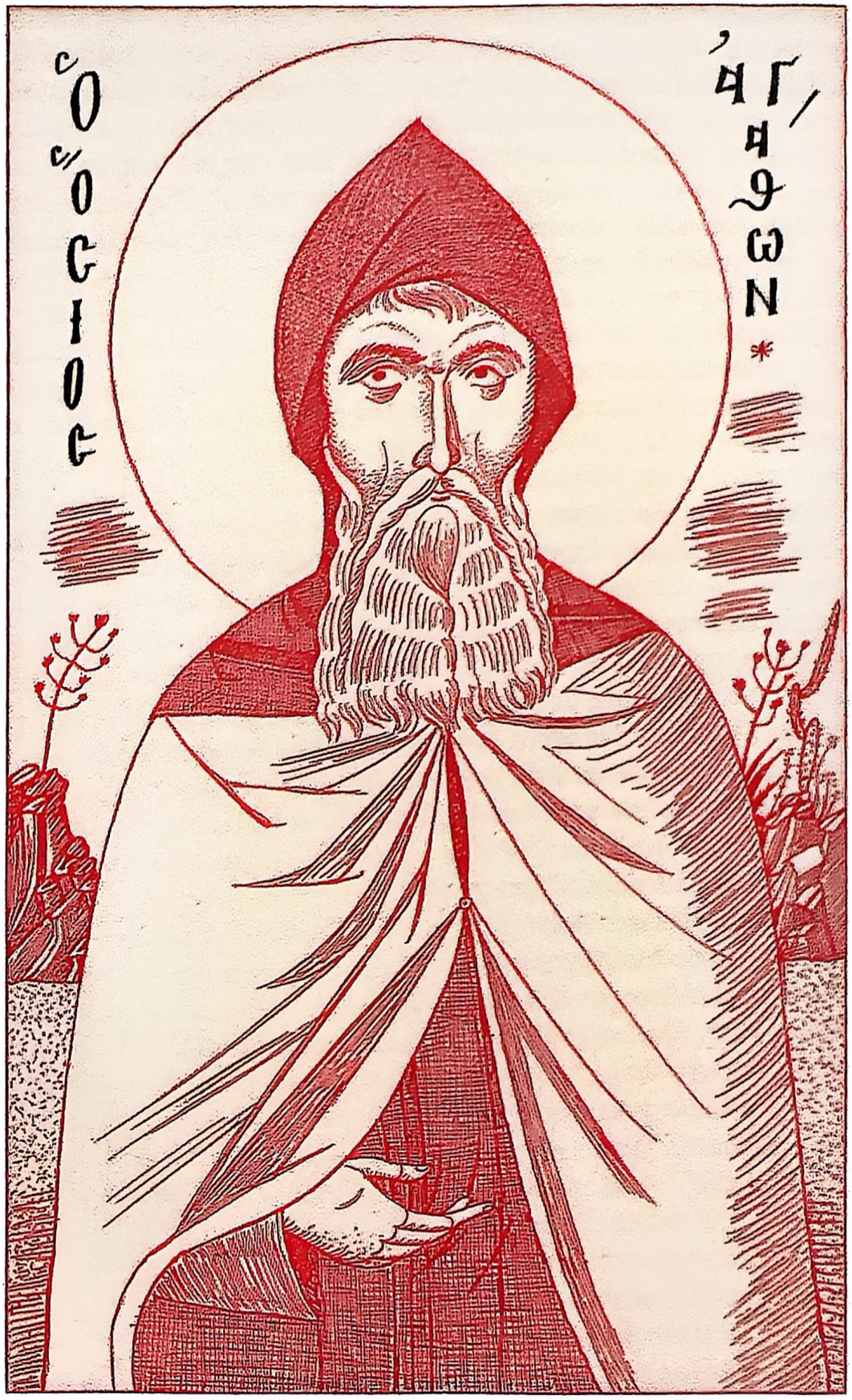
1. Near a certain Elder there dwelt a negligent brother who had lived in asceticism for only a short time. When he was about to die, some of the brothers came to sit beside him in order to comfort him, while the Elder, seeing him departing from the body cheerfully and joyfully, and wishing to edify the brothers who were present, said to him: "Brother, we are all aware that you were not very zealous in your asceticism, and so how is it that you are making your final journey so eagerly?" The

brother replied: "Believe me, Father, what you say is true. Nevertheless, since I became a monk, I am not conscious of having judged or harbored a grudge against anyone. And if I ever did have a disagreement with anyone, I immediately reconciled with him. Therefore, I plan to say to God: 'Master, Thou didst say: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven"' (St. Luke 6:37)." The Elder said to him: "Peace be with you, my child, for you have been saved without effort, by not condemning others."

2. When Abba Agathon saw anyone sinning, and his thoughts urged him to condemn that person, he would say to himself: "Agathon, beware, lest you do the same thing"; and in this way, he attained peace of mind.

3. Abba Anthony once prophesied to Abba Ammonas: "You have the capacity to make progress in acquiring the fear of God." St. Anthony led Ammonas outside his cell and, showing him a stone, said: "Insult this stone and beat it." Abba Ammonas did as he was told, without receiving any response or complaint from the stone. Abba Anthony said to him: "You are going to attain to the same measure of dispassion as this stone." And this is what happened. Abba Ammonas advanced to such a degree of forbearance and goodness that he became completely oblivious to the existence of evil. Indeed, after he had become a Bishop, some people brought before him a certain virgin who had been deflowered and had become pregnant, along with the man who had debauched her, and said to the Bishop: "Your Eminence, impose a penance on them." But he, making the sign of the Cross over the woman's womb, ordered that she be given six pairs of sheets, saying: "Lest, on the way to giving birth, she herself or her child should die and there be nothing in which to bury them." Her denouncers, seeing his generosity, said to him: "Why have you done this? Give them a penance." The Bishop replied to them: "You see, my brothers, that she is close to death; so what can I do?" And, saying this, the Elder let her go, not daring to judge her.

4. On another occasion, the same Elder went to a certain place to eat. In that same place there lived a brother who was reputed to be a fornicator. It so happened that the woman with whom the brother was sinning was present in his cell at this very time. The inhabitants in the place found out that the woman was in the brother's cell and set out to drive



St. Agathon

him from it. On being informed that Bishop Ammonas was in the vicinity, they went and begged him to come with them, so that he might rebuke the brother and expel him. When the brother learned what was in store for him, he forestalled them by hiding the woman in a large cask, which had an opening at the top. Abba Ammonas realized what the brother had done and, after entering his cell, sat down on the cask and ordered that the cell be searched to determine whether the woman was there. When they had searched everywhere without finding the woman, Abba Ammonas said to them: "May God forgive you." He uttered a prayer and dismissed all of the visitors. He then grasped the brother's hand and told him: "Be attentive to yourself, Brother." After saying this, he departed.

5. A certain brother who had sinned was dismissed from the Brotherhood by the Presbyter. Abba Bessarion arose and went out with him, saying: "I, too, am a sinner."

6. Abba Isaiah said: "If the thought occurs to you to judge your neighbor for some sin, you should consider, first and foremost, that you are more sinful than he. Do not believe that what you regard as your good deeds are pleasing to God, and you will not dare to judge your neighbor."

7. Again, he said: "The best way of putting your conscience at rest is not to judge your neighbor and to disparage yourself."

8. A certain Elder saw a brother committing an indecent act with someone else; and yet, he did not rebuke him, for he said to himself: "If God, Who fashioned them, sees them and does not burn them up, who am I to rebuke them?"

9. While visiting a *cœnobion*, Abba Isaac the Theban saw a brother sinning and condemned him. After leaving the *cœnobion*, he returned to the desert. An Angel of the Lord came and stood before the door of his cell and did not allow him to enter. The Elder pleaded with him, saying: "What is the matter? Why are you not letting me in?" The Angel replied: "God sent me to ask you where you want me to cast the erring brother whom you condemned." On hearing this, the Elder immediately repented and said: "I have sinned, forgive me." The Angel answered: "Arise; God has forgiven you. From now on, be careful not to judge any-

one, until the Lord comes."

10. It was said of Abba Makarios the Great that he had become a god upon earth, as it is written ("I said, 'Ye are gods'" [St. John 10:34]). For, just as God covers the world with His protection, so also Abba Makarios would cover the faults which he saw, as though he did not see them, and those which he heard, as though he did not hear them.

11. A brother once committed a sin in Sketis, and a council was held to adjudicate the matter. The Fathers sent for Abba Moses, but he did not wish to come. The Presbyter again sent for him, saying: "Come, for the Fathers are all waiting for you." He arose and took a worn-out basket [a basket with holes—*Trans.*], filled it with sand, and carried it to the meeting. The Fathers came out to meet him, and when they saw him carrying the basket on his shoulders, they asked him: "What is this, Father?" The Elder replied to them: "My sins are flowing out behind me, and I do not see them; and yet, I have come today to judge someone else's sins." When they heard this, they said nothing to the brother, but forgave him.

12. The same Elder said: "A man must be dead to every other man, in order not to judge anyone for anything. For when the hand of the Lord slew every firstborn in the land of Egypt, there was no house without its dead." A certain brother asked him: "What do you mean by this, Father?" The Elder answered: "If we are able to see our own sins, we will certainly not see the sins of our neighbor. It is foolishness for a man who has a dead person in his house to leave it in order to go and lament over a dead person in his neighbor's house. To die to your neighbor means to bear your own sins and not to be concerned about anyone else's affairs; not to say, 'He is bad'; not to do evil to any man; not to think any evil in your heart; not to denigrate anyone who does evil; not to trust anyone who does evil to his neighbor; and not to congratulate such a person. Likewise, it means to pay no attention to one who slanders and not to have enmity against any man or to hate anyone. This is what peace is. Encourage and safeguard yourself with these precepts, brother, knowing that toil lasts but for a short time, whereas rest will abide forever."

13. A brother asked Abba Poimen: "Tell me, how can I become a monk?" The Elder replied: "If you want to find rest, both here below and in the age to come, in every situation say, 'Who am I?' and do not

judge anyone."

14. The Presbyter of Pelousion [which was once located at the easternmost mouth of the Nile—*Trans.*] once heard that certain brothers constantly went to the city, frequented the public baths, and neglected their spiritual duties. When they came to the *Synaxis*, he deprived them of the *schema*. But after this, he was stricken in his conscience and regretted what he had done. He went to Abba Poimen, obsessing over his thoughts and carrying the monastic clothing of these brothers, and reported the matter to the Elder. The Elder said to him: "Do you not have something of the old man in you?" The Presbyter replied: "Yes, I do still have something of the old man." The Elder then repeated the words of the Apostle: "'Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things' (Romans 2:1). You see, you are just like the brothers, for if you have even a small share of the old man, you are assuredly subject to sin." The Presbyter returned, summoned the brothers (who were eleven in number), and made a prostration before them. After clothing them again in the monastic *schema*, he let them go.

15. A brother asked Abba Poimen: "If I see my brother committing a sin, is it good for me to conceal it?" The Elder answered: "At the very moment that we conceal our brother's sin, God conceals our own; and at the very moment that we reveal our brother's sin, God reveals our own. In this context, 'brother' means not one living in the same *cœnobion*, but either one living nearby or one living in the same *cœnobion* but not under the same spiritual Father.

"Such a brother should conceal and overlook another's sin, yet examine his own. The ordinances of the Fathers enjoin that those living a common life should care for one another as they care for their own members; for although they are different bodies, they belong to a single body. And if they should see their brothers sinning, they should remind each other, with humility, of their obligations. If the erring brothers are not persuaded by admonition to correct themselves, they should refer these matters to the Superior, and in this way they sanctify their love for their brothers."

16. Another brother asked the same Elder: "If I see a brother about whom I have heard that he is a sinner, I do not wish to take him into my cell; but if I see a good brother, I rejoice with him." The Elder replied: "If

you do a little good to the good one, you ought to do twice as much good to the one about whose sin you have heard. The latter is the one who is ailing. [If you do this—*Trans.*] God will have mercy on you, too.

17. "Now, there was a monk in a *cœnobion* by the name of Timothy. The Abbot heard a rumor about one of the brothers in that monastery who was undergoing temptations, and he asked Timothy about this brother. Timothy advised him to expel the brother in question. After he had been expelled, the brother's temptation immediately fell upon Timothy, to the point that he was in danger of falling into the same sin. Timothy therefore wept before God, saying: 'I have sinned, forgive me.' And a voice came to him, which said: 'Timothy, do not suppose that these things have befallen you for any other reason than that you despised your brother in the time of his temptation.'"

18. A brother in a *cœnobion* once fell into sin. In that region there dwelt an anchorite who had not emerged from his cell for many years. The Abba of the *cœnobion* went to this anchorite and told him about the erring brother. The anchorite said: "Expel him." After being cast out of the *cœnobion*, the brother found a deep ravine. He settled there, weeping and lamenting. Some of the brothers from the *cœnobion* happened to be on the way to visiting Abba Poimen, and as they passed by they heard the brother weeping from deep within the ravine. Going down into the ravine, they found him in great distress and besought him to go with them to the Elder; but he refused, saying: "I shall die in this place." When they reached Abba Poimen, they recounted the brother's situation to him. The Elder asked them to return to the brother and tell him: "Abba Poimen is calling for you." On hearing this, the brother went to the Elder. When the Elder saw the brother so distraught, he arose and embraced him, and, speaking kindly to him, invited him to eat.

Abba Poimen then sent one of his disciples to the anchorite with the following message: "For many years I have desired to see you, for I have heard many good things about you; but, out of laziness on the part of us both, we have not met each other hitherto." When the anchorite heard this, although he had never left his cell, he said: "If God had not inspired the Elder, he would not have sent someone to me." He arose and went to Abba Poimen. After embracing one another with joy, they sat down. Abba Poimen said to the anchorite: "There were two men in a certain place, and both had relatives who died. One of them left his own dead and went to mourn the other's dead." On hearing this, the an-

chorite was moved to compunction and, after reflecting on what he had done to the brother, said: "Poimen is in Heaven on high, and I am down below on earth."

19. Certain Fathers asked Abba Poimen: "If we see a brother sinning, do you want us to reproach him?" The Elder replied: "For my part, if I have to go somewhere and I see a brother sinning, I pass him by and do not reproach him."

20. Again, they asked him: "How did Abba Nisthero put up with his disciple?" The Elder answered them: "If I had been Abba Nisthero, I would even have placed a pillow under his head." Abba Anoub asked him: "But how would you explain this behavior of yours to God?" Abba Poimen replied to him: "I would say: 'Master, Thou didst say, "First cast out the beam from thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye" (St. Matthew 7:5).'"

21. A brother asked Abba Poimen: "What am I to do?" The Elder responded: "It is written: 'I will declare mine iniquity, and ponder on my sin' (Psalm 37:19)."

22. Abba Poimen once went to dwell in the region of Egypt. Nearby there lived a brother who had a concubine, for which Abba Poimen never reproached him. It so happened that one night this woman gave birth, and when the Elder got wind of this, he summoned his younger brother and said to him: "Take a *knidion***** of wine with you and offer it to our neighbor, for he has need of it today." The other members of his brotherhood had no idea about any of this, but the younger brother did as the Elder had instructed him.

The erring brother accepted the wine and, being moved to compunction, let his concubine go after a few days, after giving her whatever he possessed. He went to the Elder and said: "From today on, I am going to repent." The Elder encouraged him in his repentance. The brother built himself another cell near Abba Poimen, and there he kept in regular contact with the Elder. The latter illumined for the monk the way of God and thus won over the sinful brother.

23. There once took place a meeting in Sketis concerning a brother who had sinned; the Fathers spoke and gave their opinion, while Abba Pior remained silent. Later on, he got up and went out. He took a sack,

filled it with sand, and carried it on his shoulder behind him; he also took a small basket, put a little sand in it, and carried it in front of him. He thusly entered the place where they were meeting. When asked by the Fathers what these items meant, he said: "This sack, which contains a large amount of sand, is my sins, which are many, even innumerable; I have put these behind me, so as not to see them, labor to get rid of them, or weep over them. And look, I have placed the very few sins of my brother in front of me. I babble about these and judge him. I should not do *this* but should, rather, carry my own sins in front of me and implore God to forgive me." The Fathers stood up and said: "Truly, this is the way of salvation."

24. Abba Paphnoutios said: "One day, while traveling, I lost my way and found myself near a village, where I came across a man and a woman in a compromising situation. I immediately stopped and began to pray about my own sins, and an Angel stood before me, holding a sword, and said: 'All those who judge their brothers are slain by this sword; but because you did not judge these people, but humbled yourself before God, as if you were the one who committed the sin—for this reason, your name is inscribed in the book of the living.'"

25. An Elder said: "Do not judge a fornicator, if you are chaste, for in so doing you transgress the law of God likewise. He Who said, 'Do not fornicate' also said, 'Do not judge.'"

26. It was said about a certain Elder that he lived in Egypt in a solitary cell. A certain brother was in the habit of visiting him, as also was a certain virgin. One day, it so happened that they both visited the Elder. In the meantime, evening fell, and since it was impossible for the Elder to let them leave, he spread out his rush mat and they lay down on it, with the Elder between them. Under the influence of the Enemy, the brother and the virgin, beset by carnal warfare, sinned with each other. Although the Elder realized what had happened, he said nothing to them. Indeed, when morning came, he sent them on their way, without displaying even the slightest hostility towards them. As they journeyed, they began to repent of their sin and to feel sorely distressed. Returning to the Elder, they each made a prostration before him and said tearfully: "Abba, did you not notice how Satan mocked us and made us sin?" "Yes, I did," he answered. They asked him: "And where was your mind at that time, that you did not impede us from that loathsome and

shameful act, on account of which our hearts are now burning with sorrow?" The Elder replied: "At that time, my mind was standing, weeping, at the place where Christ was crucified." After receiving a rule of repentance from the Elder, they departed, becoming chosen vessels.

27. There was a certain Elder who ate three rusks a day. Once, he was visited by a brother. When they sat down to eat, the Elder set three rusks before the brother; then, seeing that he was still hungry, he brought him three more. After they had eaten their fill, they stood up, and the Elder condemned the brother, saying to him: "You should not think so much about the flesh, brother." The brother made a prostration before the Elder and left. On the following day, when it was time for the Elder to eat, he put out three rusks for himself, as was his custom. After eating these, he was still hungry; nonetheless, he restrained himself. But on the next day, the same thing occurred. Although he was hungry, the Elder restrained himself, because he did not want to violate his rule. But as a result, he began to grow weak. He came to understand that God had forsaken him. Throwing himself to the ground, he besought God with tears to reveal why He had forsaken him. An Angel then stood before him and said: "This happened to you since you condemned your brother and so that you might learn that it is not from his own power that one manages to restrain himself or accomplish any other virtue, but that it is the goodness of God which so enables him."

28. A holy man, when he saw someone sinning, would say with tears: "He sinned today, but I will surely sin tomorrow."

29. The same Elder said: "If anyone sins in any way whatsoever in your presence, do not condemn him, but reckon yourself to be more sinful than he, even if he be a layman."

30. One of the Fathers said: "There is no race under heaven like that of the Christians, and among Christians there is no order like that of the monastics. What causes more harm both to Christians and monastics than anything else is mutual rancor and condemnation; but he who rejects these from his heart will truly live an Angelic life on earth."

31. Two brothers who had attained spiritual maturity lived in a certain *cœnobion*. Each one was vouchsafed to see the Grace that dwelt in the other. One Friday, one of them departed from the monastery on an

errand. He happened upon a man eating early in the morning. He said to him "You are eating at such an hour, and on a Friday?" On the following day, the Eucharist was celebrated as usual. The other brother, looking at the returning brother, did not see the Grace in him, as he usually did, and was distressed. When they had returned to their cell, he said to his brother: "What have you done, brother? I did not see the Grace of God in you." He replied: "I am not aware of having done or thought anything evil." His brother said to him: "Did you perhaps speak to someone?" And he, recalling that he had done so, said: "Yesterday, outside the monastery, I saw someone eating—early in the morning, and on a Friday at that. This is my sin. But toil with me for two weeks, and let us entreat God to forgive me." And that is what they did. After two weeks, the one brother again saw the Grace of God coming upon the other. They were consoled and gave thanks to God.

32. A brother asked an Elder: "If I go to an Elder and ask him whether I should remain with someone, and he knows that this is not to my benefit, how should he respond to me? For, if he tells me, 'Do not return to him,' is he not condemning that man in his mind?" The Elder replied: "Not many people possess this degree of subtlety in scrutinizing the thoughts of others. Nonetheless, if the Elder is motivated by passion, that is, if he speaks out of animosity, either hating or casting aspersions on the man in question, he harms himself and his words are devoid of value. In that case, it would be to his advantage to say, 'I do not know,' and he would thus free himself from such a passion. But if he is free from this passion, he is not condemning anyone. Accusing himself, he will feign ignorance and say: 'I am unsociable by nature and do not keep the company of others. So, better not to ask me about the matter.' And if the questioner is prudent, he will not return to the man about whom he asked the Elder, knowing that the latter did not say what he said out of ill will, but out of concern for the salvation of the questioner. For this reason, his words have the capacity to inform the one who hears them. If the hearer is sensible, he will act on the advice that he has received."

33. One of the holy Elders heard that a brother had fallen into fornication, and he said: "Oh, what a vile thing to have done!" After a few days, the brother reposed. An Angel of God came to the Elder with the soul of the brother and said to him: "Behold, the one whom you judged has reposed; so, where do you want me to place him? In the Kingdom

of Heaven or in Hell?" After this vision, and until the end of his life, the Elder unceasingly besought God, with many tears and many struggles, to forgive him this sin.

34. An Elder said: "If you see someone laughing or eating a lot, do not judge him, but rather say: 'Blessed is this man who has no sins and whose soul rejoices for this reason.'"

35. An Elder said: "If you see someone sinning with your own eyes, say at once: 'Anathema to you, Satan!'***** In this way you are safeguarded from judging your brother and the Holy Spirit will not withdraw from you. Next, say to yourself, 'Just as he was overcome, so I, too, may be overcome.' Weep and seek help from God and show sympathy for one who has suffered involuntarily; for no one sins before God willingly, but when we sin, we are deceived by the Devil."

36. An Elder recounted the following: "When I was once living in the remotest part of the desert, I was visited by a brother from a *cœnobion*. I asked him: 'How are the Fathers faring?' 'Well, by your prayers,' he replied. I then asked about a certain brother who had a bad reputation, and he answered: 'Believe me, Father, he has not freed himself from that reputation.' When I heard this, I said, 'Ugh!' As soon as I said this, I was overcome by sleep and fell into ecstasy. I saw myself standing before Golgotha and our Lord Jesus Christ crucified between the two thieves. I started forward to worship Him, but when I came close, He turned to the Holy Angels who were standing by and said in a loud voice: 'Cast him out, since, as far as I am concerned, he is an antichrist; for before I could pass judgment, he himself has condemned his brother.' As I was being chased out of that place, my *rason* suddenly got caught in the door; leaving it there, I departed and awoke from sleep.

"Pondering on the things that I had seen, I told the visiting brother: 'This has been a bad day for me.' 'Why so, Father?' he asked. I then related to him what I had seen, and I said: 'I was deprived of my *rason*, which represents God's protection.'

"From that time hence I spent seven years in the desert regions, in the sight of the Lord of Glory, neither tasting bread, nor living under a roof, nor encountering any man, until I once more saw my Lord on Golgotha giving permission for my *rason* to be returned to me."

37. Someone asked an Elder: "Why can I not live with brothers?"

The Elder replied: "Because you do not fear God; for if you were to keep in mind the Biblical story of how Lot was saved in Sodom because he did not condemn anyone, you could cast yourself in the midst of wild beasts and live with them."

38. An Elder said: "For twenty years I have been continuously struggling over a single thought, beseeching God that I might be able to see all men as one."

I. From St. Ephraim

Do not disparage a layman in your mind, O monk; for the Lord alone knows the secrets of the heart. Honor all men for the sake of the Lord, that the Lord of all might also honor you.

From Father Paul Evergetinos

Our Holy Father Ephraim did very well, above, in adding the phrase "in your mind." For it is possible to disparage all lay people with the tongue only—without the mind taking part—for the benefit of monks who feel a love for, or proclivity towards, the world or who are close to despair, just as the Saint himself taught in another context.

* The *"keration"* [plural, *"keratia"—Trans.*] was a small silver coin of the era of St. Constantine the Great, equivalent to one-eighteenth of a drachma, in that period.

** The meaning of the counsels of this holy ascetic is as follows: A man ought to keep watch over himself, since it is possible for him, out of negligence or heedlessness, to fall into a state of spiritual narcosis, the danger of which is more fearful than any headlong fall into sin. This is also the advice of the Apostle Paul: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

*** That is, when we formulate such judgmental thoughts about our neighbor—*Trans.*

**** An indeterminate measure of wine in the ancient world.

***** This phrase is not considered blasphemous, since Satan is, one way or another, cursed by God.

Hypothesis III

That one should not cause scandal through deeds performed without a blessing; what the term "scandal" means; that one should not be scandalized; and that one should heal those who are scandalized.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Several brothers from a certain *cœnobion* went out from their monastery and visited an anchorite in the desert. He welcomed them with joy and, on seeing that they were worn out from the journey, put out a meal for them—as is customary among hermits—before the appointed hour, refreshing them with whatever he had in his cell. When evening fell, they said twelve Psalms, and likewise during the night. While the Elder was keeping vigil on his own, he heard the monks conversing with each other and saying: "The anchorites in the desert have it easier than we who live in cœnobitic monasteries." The following morning, as they were about to leave in order to visit another Elder who lived nearby, the anchorite said to them: "Greet him on my behalf and tell him not to water the vegetables." On hearing this, the other Elder understood what his neighbor meant and thus kept the visiting monks working without food until the evening. When the day had drawn to a close, he held a lengthy service and then said to them: "Let us eat now, since you are weary from your labors. It is not our custom to eat every day, but for your sake we will eat a little." He set dry bread and salt before them, saying: "We must celebrate your visit." So, he put a little salt into some vinegar [into which to dip bread—*Trans.*]. They rose after eating and recited the evening office until midnight, at which point the Elder said to the visitors: "Out of love for you, we have not observed the entire rule of prayer, so that you may rest a little." When morning came, they wished to depart. But the Elder pleaded with them: "Stay with me for a while—or at least, for the sake of the commandment, for three days, in accordance with the custom that we observe in the desert." When they saw that he was not letting them go, they arose and left secretly.

2. Two monks came down from Egypt to Sketis, in order to visit the Elders there. After conversing with each other, they sat down to eat. The

visiting monks, seeing the residents of Sketis eating ravenously, as if famished, on account of their ascetic labors, were scandalized. When the Presbyter learnt of this, he wanted to put the visitors at ease, and so he proclaimed to the brethren in the Church: "Fast, brothers, and intensify your ascetic efforts." Although the visitors from Egypt wanted to leave, the Presbyter did not allow them to go, and so they stayed on.

They fasted for the first day and began to feel giddy. The Presbyter then made them fast for two consecutive days. (The brothers of Sketis were accustomed to fasting for an entire week.) When Saturday came, the Egyptians sat down to eat with the Elders. But when the visitors started to eat their food voraciously, one of the Elders took them by the hand and said: "Eat in a disciplined way, like monks." One of them pushed away his hand, saying, "Let go of me, for I am dying of hunger. I have not eaten any cooked food this whole week." Then one of the Elders replied: "If you are so faint after fasting for two consecutive days, why were you scandalized at these brothers, who always keep such a strict fast?" The Egyptians each made a prostration to the monks of Sketis and went away joyfully, edified by this wise observation.

B. From St. Barsanouphios

1. A brother asked an Elder: "If I do something which I consider reasonable, and someone corrects me for this in an unreasonable way, should I justify myself before him or remain silent, thereby avoiding vainglory?" The Elder replied: "If you do not have to justify yourself, be silent; but if the matter bothers your brother, disregard your concern about vainglory and set his mind at rest." The brother said: "If I do something morally neutral, in which there is no sin, and I know that if such and such a brother catches me doing it, he will be scandalized at me, and I conceal it out of vainglory, since I will be ashamed if he sees me doing it—should I not conceal it, lest I fall into vainglory, or should I conceal it, lest I scandalize him? And if I do not know for certain whether he will be scandalized, but merely suspect that he will, what should I do?" The Elder responded: "If your heart accuses you of scandalizing your brother, conceal it and do not put thoughts in his mind; but if you do not know this for certain, but simply suspect it, do not be concerned about it."

2. The brother asked: "If I say something provocative to someone and he does not understand what it means, should I make a prostration be-

fore him, or is it preferable for me to remain silent and not disturb him with my thoughts?" The Elder replied: "If your brother does not realize that you provoked him with your words, be silent and do not disturb him, but hasten to make a prostration before God for what you have said." The same brother then asked: "Tell me, Master, what sort of boldness of speech should we have in our lives and how we should apply it."

3. The Elder answered: "Having boldness of speech means speaking the truth openly. If, for example, someone needs food, clothing, or anything else whatever, he ought to speak candidly about it to one who has the authority to provide these things. We should not exercise boldness towards just anyone, but deliberately towards those persons who can tolerate such boldness without being scandalized.

4. "For he who has discernment is edified spiritually and rejoices in this boldness; but he who lacks discernment is scandalized by it. One who speaks boldly ought to use this boldness, not to satisfy some passion that vexes him, but to take care of some vital need. If, therefore, no one is going to be scandalized, and we are not motivated by some passion, then we may speak freely.

5. "If a brother is scandalized by our frankness, then we should handle the situation with discretion and beware of scandalizing our neighbor by speaking boldly. For perhaps someone is tired from work and wants to eat earlier than the others, but another brother who hears or sees him wanting this is scandalized; or it may happen that you ask for something which does not edify your brother spiritually. In these cases, you should address your request privately to him who has the authority to grant it, so as to keep your brother's mind from being harmed. From what I have said, we may conclude that frankness is good, as long as one uses it with fear of God.

6. "But you destroy it in the following way. Let us suppose that you are in need of something and fail to ask one who is able to provide it, but wait by yourself for him to surmise what is on your mind and give it to you. But perhaps he does not know what you need, or, if he does know, perhaps he has forgotten; or maybe he does not fulfill your desire because he wishes to test whether you have patience. And so, you murmur against him, because he supposedly disdains you, or you are scandalized, and you sin against him.

7. "But if you speak frankly and formulate your request without beating about the bush, none of this will happen. In any event, it is good for you to prepare yourself mentally beforehand, so that in case you do not receive what you are asking for, you will not be upset, or scandalized, or grumble. Say in your mind: 'If he does not give me what I asked for, either he is not in a position to offer it to me or I am not worthy of it—or it would not benefit me, and for this reason God did not allow him to give it to me.' Be careful not to lose your nerve under the influence of the aforementioned failure, so that if you again have need of something, you may freely ask him for it, preparing yourself, as I said, to remain unperturbed in the event that you are unsuccessful.

8. "Likewise, if someone asks you for something that you need, tell him the truth: that you need it. If, on the other hand, you are embarrassed and deny that you need it, do not hesitate to say to the one who asked you: 'Forgive me, brother, for I was stung by pride and I told you that I did not need it; on the contrary, I do need the item that you mentioned.'"

9. The brother then asked the Elder: "If I am not certain about the disposition of the person who can grant my request, and do not know whether or not he will be scandalized by such boldness on my part, what should I do?" The Elder replied: "You can find out whether or not he will be scandalized by testing him. If, for example, you need something to eat, do not say to him outright, 'Give me something to eat,' but frame your request indirectly, as follows: 'I am hungry'—for example—'because I worked hard today.' When he hears you, he will certainly make himself clear, and from this you will find out whether or not he is scandalized."

In response to this, the brother said: "Father, you said that for me to ask openly for what I need constitutes boldness. But how is it that when the great Elder was asked by Brother John whether he could cut up fruit to eat, the former allowed him to eat only what had been given him and not to ask for anything else? It seems that, in this case, the Elder is deterring him from frankness."

10. The Elder replied: "Brother John was minded not to eat anything. But that clairvoyant Elder realized that this thought had been suggested to John by demons and, wishing to rebuke them, said: 'Do not ask for anything on your own, and then you will understand the wickedness of

our foes; for he who now suggests to you not to eat at all will make you grumble when they offer you only a little or nothing at all.' This is why the great Elder responded to John in the way that he did. Besides, he had given his disciple this commandment. Where there is no commandment involved, frankness is to our advantage."

C. From St. Ephraim

If you are living with other brethren, do not become the occasion for anyone to withdraw from the brotherhood, lest you be condemned in the next world. Be very careful not to scandalize any of the brothers by your behavior, so that you will not be cast out of the Kingdom of Heaven along with those who cause scandal.

Hypothesis IV

That the Christian should take his every thought into captivity and offer it to Christ; for spiritual people, and certain lay people, draw positive lessons even from most disgraceful circumstances.

A. From the Life of St. Pelagia

1. On one occasion, the Archbishop of Antioch was sitting with his Bishops outside the Church of the Holy Martyr Julian. They were conversing about various soul-profiting matters, when Pelagia passed by in front of them, adorned and dressed in her usual finery, sitting in a chariot and escorted by her many admirers. She made the air around her fragrant with her perfumes and the surrounding area resplendent with the precious stones and pearls that she wore.

When this assembly of Pastors saw her passing by so shamelessly and provocatively, some of them rebuked her for her whorish appearance, unable to discern anything higher than what they saw at that moment. They could not bear to look at her at all, but blushed with embarrassment and turned their gaze elsewhere.

2. But one, Bishop Nonnos, who knew precisely how to derive spiritual profit from adverse situations, and who used as kindling for virtue what anyone else would probably experience in his soul as a stimulus to pleasure, in contrast to the other Fathers, did not take his eyes off the courtesan, but looked intently at her while she was passing by and kept staring at her as she went on her way.

3. He then sighed deeply and his eyes filled with tears; and that blessed Father began to bewail himself. When questioned by the other Fathers, he told them the following:

"The adornment of this sinful woman is to my condemnation. She, who is enamored of perishable bodies—and this to her own detriment—and whose body blooms with genuine beauty, does not tire of enhancing her natural beauty artificially, by using a variety of cosmetics, so as to make bitter pleasure her handmaid. In contrast to her, however, we,

St. Pelagia

whose Beloved and—I should add—Lover is immortal, who have an immortal Bridegroom, and for whom Grace does not grow old if we truly adorn ourselves, are so negligent in adorning our immortal souls, that we are not embarrassed even when we disfigure their natural beauty, but disgrace ourselves and hinder ourselves, in a pathetic way, from enjoying the ineffable and wondrous delights of Heaven. And we do all of this, even though we are fully aware of the punishment prepared for the negligent and of the tribunal beyond the grave."

4. Nonnos made these remarks not only with regard to the present, in my opinion, but also because he foresaw the future in his mind, knowing that he and his fellow-Bishops would prove inferior to her in spiritual beauty and would come in second place—behind a former prostitute—in spiritual contests.

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. At one time, while Abba Makarios was passing through Egypt with his brothers, he heard a boy saying to his mother: "Mama, a rich man loves me, but I hate him; a poor man hates me, but I love him." The Elder listened and marvelled, and the brothers asked him: "Father, what did the boy say to cause you astonishment?" The Elder replied to them: "Truly, our Lord is rich and loves us, and yet we do not want to listen to Him; whereas our enemy, the Devil, is poor and hates us, and yet we love his impurity."

2. Several brothers went one day to test Abba John the Short, since he never allowed his mind to be distracted and did not speak about the things of this transitory life. The brothers greeted him and said: "We thank God that it rained a good deal this year, that the palm trees received sufficient water to put forth leaves, and that the brothers are finding materials for their handiwork." Abba John replied to them: "So it is when the Holy Spirit descends into the hearts of men: they are renewed, and put forth leaves in the fear of God."

3. The Blessed Athanasios, Archbishop of Alexandria, asked Abba Pambo to come down from the desert into Alexandria. After coming down into the city, the Elder saw an actress and began to weep. When the bystanders asked him why he was weeping, he replied: "Two things have moved me to shed tears: first, this woman's perdition and, second,

the fact that I am not as zealous in pleasing God as she is in pleasing the dregs of humanity."

C. From St. Ephraim

1. My beloved, if your soul is upright before the Lord, it will be possible for you to derive benefit from all the things of this life. If you see a businessman, tell yourself: "My soul, in his desire for transitory goods, this man toils and endures so much, in order to amass things which do not abide (with him even until his death). Why do you neglect things that are eternal?" If you see litigants, say to yourself: "My soul, these people needlessly display such great zeal and quarrel with each other so vociferously. Why do you, who owe God ten thousand talents, not fall down before Him, as you should, and beseech Him to erase your debt?"

2. If you see builders constructing houses, say again: "My soul, these men here, although they are building houses out of mud, nonetheless display great zeal in completing the work which they have planned. Why do you disregard the eternal mansions and why do you not struggle to erect a dwelling place for God in your soul, by combining and assembling the virtues?" Not to protract our discourse by referring to these different cases one by one, let us be zealous to transform worldly thoughts and attitudes, which arise from our visual perception of the things of this life, into spiritual ones. If we do this, we will assuredly benefit from everything by the coöperation of Divine Grace.

Hypothesis V

Concerning craftiness and guile, simplicity and guilelessness; whence they are engendered; what sort of harm and benefit we derive from them; and concerning envy.

A. From Abba Isaiah

1. Simplicity of character and not considering oneself important sanctify one's heart and render it immune to the Evil One. Sorrow of heart will never depart from one who behaves guilefully towards his brother. As for the man who says one thing with his lips, but guilefully harbors other feelings in his heart, his every prayer is futile.

2. Do not attach yourself to such a person, lest you be defiled by the poison of one whose soul is polluted. Associate with guileless people, so that you might share in their glory and their innocence. Do not have guile towards anyone, lest you render your spiritual labors worthless. Keep your heart pure towards all, so that you might behold the peace of God within you. For just as, when one is stung by a scorpion, its venom permeates his entire body and damages his heart, such also is the effect of malice in the heart towards one's neighbor. Indeed, the venom of this malice pricks the soul and the latter comes into danger of being destroyed thereby. Whoever is concerned lest his spiritual labors go to ruin is quick to shake off this scorpion; namely, guile and malice.

3. If a brother offers you something, do not hasten, without his permission, to open it to see what it contains. If he confirms that what he is offering to you is very valuable, then say to him: "Please place it in my hands."

4. If you are afflicted by envy, remember that we are all members of Christ and that both the honor and the ignominy of our neighbor are the honor and ignominy of us all. Thus you will find peace.

B. From St. Maximos

1. It takes effort to restrain the resentment of an envious man; for he regards what he envies in you as his own misfortune. It is not possible for you to curb this passion in any other way than by concealing the object of his envy. However, if this thing benefits many, but arouses resentment in him, whose side will you take and whose will you disregard?

2. It is assuredly necessary to benefit the majority; but as far as possible, you should not neglect the envious man, so that he is not destroyed by the passion from which he suffers. You will not be defending his illogical and impersonal passion, but the poor man suffering from it. Humbly consider him a better man than yourself and put his interests before yours everywhere, always, and in every circumstance.

3. You will curb your own envy if you rejoice over that which gives joy to the one whom you envy and if you grieve together with the one whom you envy over that which grieves him. In this way, you will fulfill the recommendation of the Apostle Paul: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15).

C. From Abba Mark

1. He who does wrong in secret is more wicked than those who do wrong openly, and for this reason he is punished more severely.

2. He who machinates and does evil in secret is a serpent, as Scripture says, lying on the path and biting the heel of a horse (Genesis 49:17). He who at the same time praises his neighbor to one man, yet criticizes him to another, has been overcome by vainglory and envy. He attempts to conceal his envy with praise, while through censure he makes himself out to be better than his neighbor.

3. Just as it is not possible for sheep and wolves to graze together, so also it is impossible for one who deceives his neighbor to obtain mercy (from God).

D. From St. Ephraim

He who remains silent out of guile, when he is reproached, conceals rancor in his heart; but he who defends himself in meekness and peace

is devoid of rancor.

Hypothesis VI

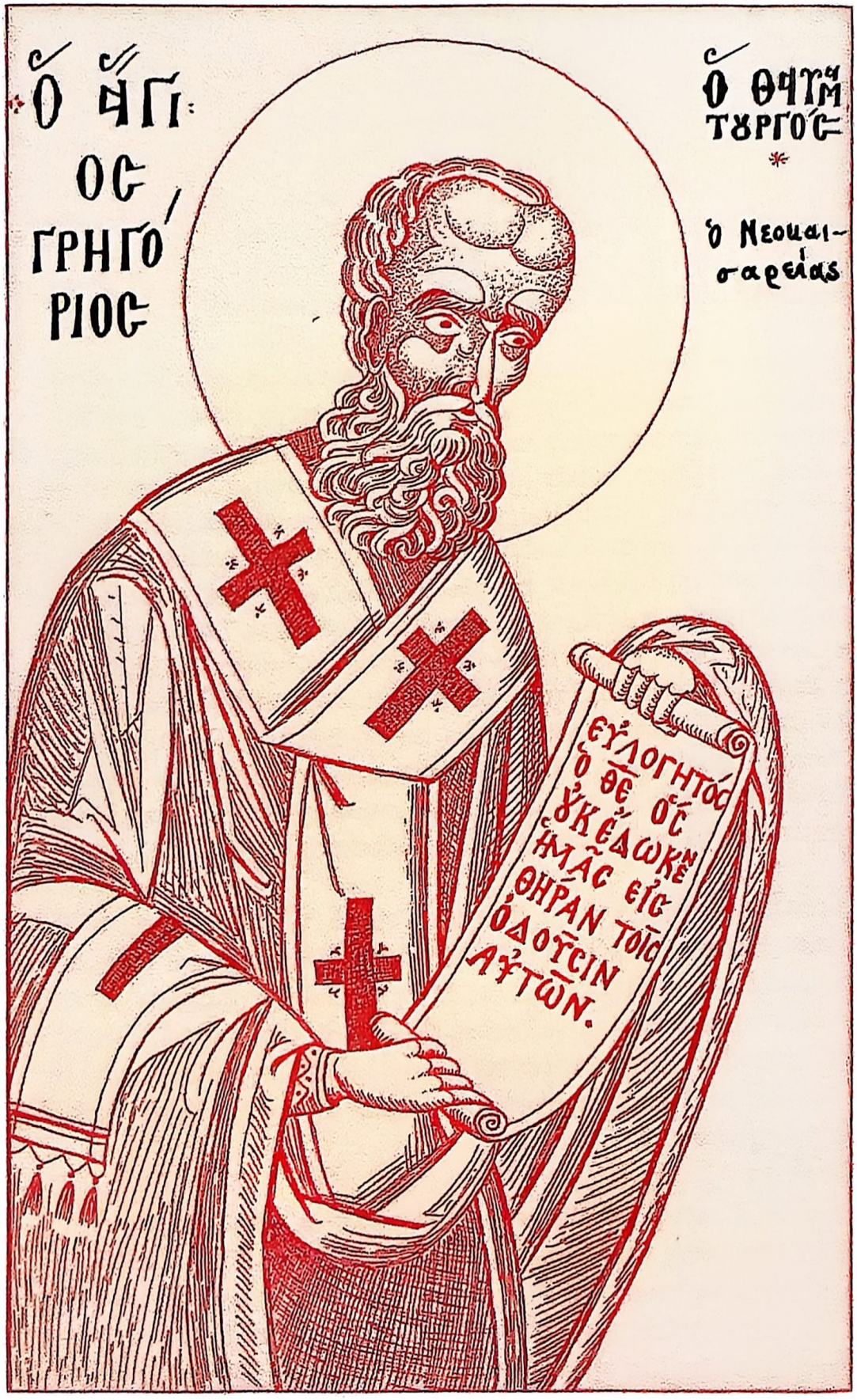
That those who despise and deride unpretentious and self-abasing people sin very gravely.

A. From the Life of St. Gregory the Wonderworker

1. It was evident to everyone that the great Gregory* was very zealous, above all and at all times, to offer comfort to those in need. On one occasion, he was returning to his own city from the neighboring city of Komana. Two Jews, either with a view to making a profit or because they intended to ridicule the Saint as being easily deceived, kept watch for him on the road on which he was going to be traveling. The one man stretched out on his back beside the highway and played dead; the other, pretending that he was lamenting the "dead" man, simulated the cries of mourners. When the Saint passed by, he exclaimed: "This poor man died suddenly, and now lies here naked, without the wherewithal for his burial." With feigned tears, he besought the Saint not to neglect the demands of piety,** but to show some compassion for the man's poverty and to provide from his own resources the means whereby they might cover his body with a funeral shroud.

2. Such were the pleas that he uttered. Without a second thought, the Saint removed the cloak that he was wearing, placed it on the supine man, and continued his journey. After the Saint had passed by and those who had tricked him were left on their own, that swindler immediately transformed his sham mourning into laughter and exhorted his companion to get up, guffawing gleefully at the profit which their dupery had brought them.

3. His accomplice, however, remained in the same position, unable to hear anything that the other was saying to him. Although the latter shouted more loudly and prodded him with his foot, his companion did not experience any sensation. He remained in the same position, neither hearing the shouting nor feeling any pain from the prodding; for he had died as soon as the cloak was placed on him, being overtaken by the very death which he had feigned in order to hoodwink the Saint.



St. Gregory the Wonderworker of Neocæsarea

Hence, the man of God was not deceived, but the cloak proved useful for the purpose for which they sought it.

4. Let no one be surprised at the seemingly woeful result of that great man's faith and power, but let him consider the great Apostle Peter. He, too, displayed the great power with which God endowed him, not only by working beneficial miracles (he healed the sufferings of the sick merely by the shadow of his body), but also by condemning Ananias to death for despising the power that dwelt in him. Although the punishment of Ananias was harsh, it nonetheless inspired a salutary fear in everyone, so that those inclined to be contemptuous might become more prudent and be instructed, by this fearful example, not to fall into similar errors.

5. It was entirely natural, therefore, that the emulator of Peter should have obtained the same result with him who wanted to deceive the Holy Spirit and, in the evil act which these swindlers carried out, tried to mock the Saint and to profit from him. Rightly, therefore, did these Jews, who supposed that they could trifle with the power of this great Saint, become an example for others not to have recourse to fraud, since God rebukes those who dare such things.

B. From St. Ephraim

If a man is more industrious and diligent than others in acquiring the virtues, let no one despise him. On the contrary, we should welcome such people, because they are both dear to God and useful to the community. Let us be persuaded of this by the two encampments, that of the Hebrews and that of the Philistines, and by the single combat between David and Goliath (I Kings 17:42-51), as well as by those who were shipwrecked at sea and were all saved, thanks to the righteous man who was with them, as it is written: "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee" (Acts 27:24).

* The Gregory in question is St. Gregory, Bishop of Neocæsarea, the Wonderworker, who is celebrated on November 17 (see the *Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, Vol. XI, p. 433).

** That is, the universal but unwritten law, that an unburied corpse should be given proper burial—*Trans.*

Hypothesis VII

That the believer should do what he does with a good, and not with a bad, conscience; for God judges the deeds of each man, not according to appearance, but according to the intention of the doer.

A. From St. Gregory the Dialogist*

1. There are many things, Peter, which are considered to be good, whereas in reality they are not, since they are not done with a good disposition. The Lord stated this in the Gospel: "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (St. Matthew 6:23). If a deed is motivated by deceit, then the entire deed, with all of its consequences, will be perverse.

2. An Elder said of Moses that, before he smote the Egyptian, he looked carefully this way and that; that is, he was attentive to his thoughts and intention. When he ascertained that he was not doing anything harmful to anyone else, but was doing what he was doing for the sake of God, he then smote the Egyptian.

3. There is such a thing as an action which is ostensibly good, while the motive of the one who performs it is yet not good; and there is such a thing as an action which is ostensibly bad, while the motive of the one who performs it is yet good.** People not only perform actions, but also utter words, in the way that we have said. Indeed, when people do things that are discrepant with their motives, in some cases they do so out of inexperience or ignorance; in other cases they do so with an evil intention; and in yet others they do so with a pious aim.

4. It is difficult for simpler people to detect one who conceals slander against his neighbor under the pretext of praising him. This type of person is similar to one who makes an outward show of humility, but is inwardly vainglorious. For a long time, such people cunningly disguise the truth with falsehood; but later on, when exposed for what they really are, they give up the pretense.

5. It is possible for someone to do something that is manifestly good, in defending his neighbor; and it is also possible for someone to benefit psychically by not doing a good deed of this kind. There are people who reprove their neighbors out of malice or vengeance, yet others who do so out of fear of God and respect for the truth. Disclose the thoughts of your mind to God; for, "man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh at the heart" (I Kings 16:7). When you sin in secret, do not suppose that you escape God's notice, since "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). And in Him lies our justification.

6. God judges our actions according to our intentions, for Scripture says, "The Lord grant to thee according to thine own heart" (Psalm 19:5). It is possible for someone ostensibly to be fulfilling a commandment of God and yet, in serving some passion, to destroy his good deed through evil thoughts.

7. Fulfilling a commandment is one thing and practicing a virtue is another, although each is stimulated by the other. Fulfilling a commandment consists in doing what has been commanded; practicing a virtue means acting in conformity with the truth.

8. Just as material wealth is one, but is acquired in many ways, so also virtue is one, but is put into practice in a variety of ways. If one wishes to do something but cannot, in the sight of God, Who knows men's hearts, it is as if he had done it. This principle is to be understood as applying both to good and to bad actions. The mind can do many things, both good and bad, without the body. But without the mind, the body can do neither good nor evil, because the law of freedom exists in the mind prior to any action.

9. God examines the purpose of everything that we do, whether it is for His sake or for some other motive. When you hear it said in Holy Scripture, "for Thou shalt render to every man according to his works" (Psalm 61:13), understand that it is not those actions which—though they may seem to be good—are not done for the right reason that God regards as good, but clearly those which *are* done for the right reason. For the judgment of God looks not to what is done, but to the motive of what is done.

10. There are many human activities that are good by nature, but which cease to be good when done for ulterior motives. Works such as fasting, vigil, prayer, psalmody, almsgiving, and hospitality are good by nature, but not good when done out of vainglory.

11. The rewards for labors of virtue are dispassion and spiritual knowledge, and it is through these that we are vouchsafed the Kingdom of Heaven, just as the passions and ignorance are the cause of eternal punishment. He who seeks these rewards in order to receive glory from men, and not for the sake of their inherent goodness, will hear the following words of Scripture: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss" (St. James 4:3).

B. From St. Isaac

Virtue is not the manifestation of many and various deeds performed by means of the body, but a heart rendered most wise by its hope in God; such a heart combines right intention and Godly works.

The mind can accomplish that which is good without bodily deeds; but the body, without the wisdom of the heart, even if it performs good deeds, derives no benefit therefrom.

* Sections 2-11 are not, in fact, from St. Gregory the Dialogist. Section 2 is from one of the anonymous collections of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*; sections 3-8 are from St. Mark the Ascetic; and sections 9-11 are from St. Maximos the Confessor—*Editors.*

** The words "while the motive of the one who performs it is yet not good; and there is such a thing as an action which is ostensibly bad, while" are missing from the printed text of the *Εὐεργετινός* (see *Φιλοκαλία* [Athens: Aster, 1974], Vol. I, p. 98)—*Editors.*

Hypothesis VIII

That the conscience is a great gift of God to us and is very beneficial to him who listens to it.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Agathon said that a monk must not allow his conscience to accuse him in any matter whatsoever.

2. The Elders used to say that the soul is a spring: if you deepen it by digging, it is cleansed; but if you add earth to it, it is destroyed. I think that by "soul" they meant the conscience, which one who obeys it makes clearer but which he who disobeys it and tramples on it dulls.

B. From St. Isaiah the Anchorite

1. Brethren, let us imitate all the Saints, who did not yield to sin even unto death, listening to their consciences and thereby inheriting the Heavenly Kingdom. Let us, therefore, pay attention to our conscience with fear of God, until the conscience and we are set free from evil influences and passions, so that there might be harmony between our actions and the upright commands of conscience and so that there might reign in the realm of our souls a perfect harmony of thoughts, intentions, and virtuous actions.

2. Our conscience will then become a guardian for us, showing us everything that we must excise from ourselves. If we do not listen to it, it will withdraw from us and abandon us, and we will fall into the hands of our enemies (that is, the passions), who will no longer show us any mercy, as our Master taught us when He said: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" (St. Matthew 5:25-26). The Fathers say that the adversary in question is the conscience, which stands up to a man whenever he wishes to

fulfill the desires of his flesh and which, if he does not listen to it, hands him over to his enemies.

C. From St. Mark

1. If you are seeking to cure your soul, give heed to your conscience; do whatever it tells you and you will find benefit.

2. Neighbors have much advice to offer us for our benefit, but nothing is more suitable for each man than his own judgment—provided, of course, his conscience is clear.

3. God and the conscience know the secrets of each man; let him receive correction through them.

4. One who does not persevere in examining his conscience will not accept bodily suffering for the sake of the Faith.

5. The conscience is nature's book; he who reads it and applies it experiences God's help.

6. A good conscience is acquired through prayer, and pure prayer through the conscience; each by nature has need of the other.

D. From St. Maximos

Do not disdain your conscience, for it always gives you the best advice. It sets before you the Will of God and the Angels, frees you from the secret defilements of the heart, and grants you boldness before God at your departure from this life.

Hypothesis IX

That we should always be attentive and guard ourselves on all sides, since the Enemy assails us from all sides and through every means.

A. From the Life of St. Synkletike

1. St. Synkletike said to her assembled nuns: "We must arm ourselves against our adversaries in every conceivable way; for they both attack us from without and war against us from within. Just as a ship is sometimes overwhelmed by waves from outside, and at other times is submerged by the bilge that collects in its hold, so also the soul is at times in danger from the external assaults of evil spirits and at times surrenders to its enemies through its own inner thoughts. Therefore, we must observe the assaults of evil spirits that come from without and also detect the evils within us, which derive from our own thoughts; and we must, in particular, be vigilant towards our thoughts, for they are constantly pressing on us and, without our realizing it, they send us to perdition.

2. "For it often happens that when a ship is imperilled by waves from without, and the sailors cry out for help, the ships in the immediate vicinity come to its rescue; but if there is a crack in the hold and the sailors are asleep, the sea will inundate the ship and sink it even if there is no storm. We must, therefore, make more effort to pay attention to our thoughts. For the Enemy, wishing to demolish the soul as if it were a house, either causes it to collapse from the foundations or destroys the entire house, beginning from the roof, or, entering through the windows, first ties up the owner of the house and then gains control over everything. The foundations are good deeds, the roof is faith, the windows are the senses, and through all of these the Enemy makes war on us.

3. "Hence, he who wishes to be saved must keep his eyes peeled. In the present life we do not have freedom from cares, for Scripture says: 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (I Corinthians 10:12). Our life resembles the sea, parts of which contain reefs, while

other parts teem with sea monsters and yet others are tranquil and not so turbulent. We monastics seem to be sailing in the calm regions of the sea, whereas lay people are sailing in the dangerous parts. Moreover, we monastics sail by day, guided by the Sun of righteousness, while lay people sail by night, borne along by ignorance. However, it is often possible for the layman, amid darkness and tempests, to save his ship (that is, his soul) by crying to God and remaining vigilant, whereas we monastics, although we are in calm seas, sink through negligence, since we let go of the rudder of righteousness. Wherefore, let him who stands not fall; for he who falls is concerned only about getting up. And let him who stands beware lest he fall."

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. As he was dying, Abba Bessarion said: "A monk should be as the Cherubim and the Seraphim: all eyes."

2. Abba Poimen said: "We have need of nothing but a vigilant heart."

3. The same Elder said: "The enemies of our souls hide hypocritically behind their cunning deeds."

4. The same Elder cites the following dialogue between a brother and Abba Simon: "If I go out of my cell and find my brother distracted over something, I am distracted along with him. If I find him laughing, I laugh with him. And when I return to my cell, I am not allowed any peace." The Elder replied to him: "If you go out of your cell and find brothers laughing, you want to laugh with them? And if you find them talking, you want to talk with them? And when you return to your cell, you want to find yourself as you were before? That is impossible. Keep watch inside your cell, and keep watch outside it."

5. A certain Elder visited another Elder. While they were conversing, one of them said: "I am dead to the world." The other said to him: "Do not be self-confident, brother, until you depart from the body; for you may say that *you* are dead, but Satan *is not dead*."

6. Standing beside a holy man at the hour of his death, Satan said: "You have eluded me." The Elder replied: "I do not yet know whether

St. Bessarion

I have eluded you."

7. When Abba Agathon was at the point of death, he lay for three days with his eyes open. The brothers nudged him, saying: "Abba Agathon, where are you?" He replied to them: "I am standing before the Judgment Seat of God." The brothers asked him: "And are you afraid, Father?" The Elder answered: "Hitherto, I have done everything within my power to keep God's commandments; but I am a man. How do I know whether my deeds are pleasing to God?" The brothers asked him: "Are you not confident that your deeds were according to God's Will?" The Elder said: "I will not be confident until I meet God; God's judgment is one thing, man's another." When they wanted to ask him another question, he said to them: "Please do me a favor and do not speak with me anymore, for I am busy." He reposed in joy; for they saw him ascending upwards, rejoicing in the same way that one does when he greets his friends and loved ones.

8. Abba Makarios was once going to the innermost desert, when he encountered an old man carrying a load and burdened with a multitude of vessels hanging over his body. There was a feather on each vessel. He was wearing these vessels instead of clothing. On seeing this character, Abba Makarios stood in amazement. The old man asked him: "What are you doing, wandering in this desert?" St. Makarios replied: "I desire to find God and am fleeing from error. But who are you, old man? Tell me, for I see that your clothing is strange and unconventional by human standards. Indeed, what are these items with which you are covered?"

Invisibly constrained by Divine power and against his will, the old man admitted: "I am the one whom you call Satan and the Devil, and these items that cover me are the means by which I lead men astray and attract them to myself. I apply the appropriate bait to each member or part of the body: I agitate men's hearts with the wings of desire and destroy those who obey me, and thus I rejoice in the fall of those whom I conquer."

On hearing this, St. Makarios plucked up courage and said to him: "Since Christ has reduced you to a plaything for His servants, why are you still boasting like this? And tell me what power each of your charms possesses. For you have appeared for this purpose: that we might learn of your various tricks and not assent to your will."

The Devil replied: "I will divulge to you the secrets of my craft, al-

St. Makarios of Egypt

beit unwillingly, since He Who permits you to see these things is forcing me to tell you about them. Learn, therefore, the purpose of each vessel.

"If I find someone unceasingly studying the Law of the Lord (Holy Scripture), I attempt to impede him from this activity by anointing him from the vessel around my head and giving him a headache. If someone intends to keep vigil in hymns and prayers, I take the potion from the vessel around my forehead and anoint him with the feather on that vessel, thereby inducing drowsiness, and compelling him to fall asleep. The vessels that I wear around my ears are primed to bring about disobedience, and through them I persuade those who desire to be saved not to listen to the preaching of the truth. As for the vessels around my nose, I take fragrant perfumes from them, and with these I incite young men to fornication. With the charms hanging around my mouth, I entice ascetics by means of pleasant foods and gluttony into doing my will. I also unleash the vices of slander and foul language against them; and when they receive the seeds of these, they cultivate an abundance of the fruits that delight me.

"From the vessels hanging around my neck I anoint those living virtuous lives with pride and puff them up with arrogance, and thus I bring them down into perdition, while others I drive insane with the desire to please men and acquire human glory; and after binding them with these fetters, I lead them far away from God. The vessels that you see around my chest contain my own kinds of thoughts, and by inebriating men's hearts with the liquor of impiety I darken the pious thoughts of those who wish to reflect on the future life; and I make the memory of these things disappear through forgetfulness. The vessels around my belly are filled with insensibility, and through these I cause men to live lives of irrationality and brutishness. With the vessels hanging below my stomach I stimulate men to give themselves over to adultery, fornication, and licentiousness, while those in my hands are equipped to promote envy and murder. Those hanging on my back and shoulders are the dark temptations, whereby I vehemently machinate against those who attempt to fight against me; setting traps behind their backs, I bring down those who have confidence in their own abilities.

"The vessels that hang around my thighs and legs and down to my feet are the various intricate traps and snares that I sprinkle on the paths of the righteous, in order to confuse them, prevent them from treading the road of piety, and to lure them into walking on my road. Stationed as I am at the crossroads of life and death, I strengthen them to follow

my path; those who turn off onto this path reject the path of truth altogether. But you, for your part, were never willing to listen to me at all—not even once—that I might have a little consolation. On the contrary, you always burn me when I approach you, since you have a mighty weapon at your disposal. This is why I make haste to flee to my own servants; for you and your fellow-servants have a good Master, Who speaks to you gently and watches over you as His own children."

On hearing this, the Holy Elder crossed himself and said: "Blessed is God, Who has handed you over to those who hope in Him, to your shame. May He completely protect me and all who call upon Him from your deception, and may He drive you far away from us and bring you to naught." As he said this, the Devil vanished in a puff of smoke. Abba Makarios gave thanks to God and went on his way, rejoicing.

9. It was said of a certain Elder that he besought God to let him see demons, but it was revealed to him that he had no need to see them. The Elder implored God, saying: "Lord, Thou hast the power to shelter me with Thy hand." So God uncovered his eyes and he beheld how the demons encircled a man like bees, gnashing their teeth against him, while an Angel of the Lord rebuked them.

10. Abba Isaiah said: "I am like a sparrow whom some boy has bound by one of its feet. If the boy relaxes his grip on the string, the sparrow immediately flies away, thinking that it has been set free; but if the boy tugs at the string, he brings the sparrow back down again. This is how I see myself, too. I say this because we should avoid being negligent until our last breath, on account of the manifold malice of our enemy."

11. He also said: "If a man performs great miracles and healings, possesses all knowledge (I Corinthians 13:2), and raises the dead, as long as he has fallen into sin, he cannot be free from care, since he is subject to repentance.

"Let us take courage, therefore, brethren, and let us cast ourselves before God. And the goodness of God will show mercy on us and send us the power to divest ourselves of the weight of unclean passions, for the Enemy does not cease at every hour from hunting after us, in his desire to snatch our souls. Our Lord Jesus Christ is with us, chastising him through His holy commandments—if we keep them.

"Blessed is the man who is conscious and ashamed of his passions

and begs to be delivered from them, but woe to those who waste their time in negligence. Such have reckoned themselves to be free from sin, trampling upon their conscience, not wishing to be pricked by it, and not recognizing that nothing can be considered small, no matter how small it may appear.

"For just as a farmer is vexed and reckons his labor futile when none of the seeds that he has sown bears fruit, so also a man, even if he knows all mysteries and all knowledge (I Corinthians 13:2), works many miracles and healings, endures great and divers hardships, and is down to his last garment, is nonetheless still subject to fear—lest his labors bear no fruit—and is unable to trust in his own conscience. For he still has enemies who scheme against him and hunt after him. Only when he attains to perfect love will he know that 'charity [love—*Trans.*] never faileth' but 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (I Corinthians 13:7). Therefore, he who has the fear of God strives with all of his might to withstand hardship in an unceasing endeavor to guard his soul; and then he finds himself unworthy so much as to utter the name of God with his mouth."

12. The same Elder said: "Brother, as long as you are in the body, do not leave your heart unguarded; for just as a farmer cannot be confident about any crop growing in his field, since he does not know what might happen to him before he has shut it up in his storehouses, so also a man cannot leave his heart unguarded while he still has breath. Just as a man, as long as he is alive and subject to illness, does not know what suffering might befall him until his last breath, so also, when it comes to his soul, he cannot be negligent as long as he is in the territory of his enemies—that is, the present life—but must always cry out to God for His help and mercy.

"Brothers, you who are spiritual and have made some degree of progress must also guard yourselves, even in small matters, until your last breath, for Scripture says: 'He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little' (Ecclesiasticus 19:1). And do not ask: 'But how can a spiritual man fall?' Such a person, as long as he maintains guard over himself, does not fall. However, when he accepts some small, but negative, thought and dwells on it without repenting, that small thought grows over time and can no longer endure remaining by itself as an orphan, but drags him forcibly into the family of the passions to which it belongs, pulling him in forcibly, using its longstanding friendship with him as a rope. If, after fighting against the thought through

prayer, he cuts it off, he remains at the previous level of spiritual progress, falling short of the dispassion that he had before only to the extent that it was necessary for him to overcome this thought. But if, in the end, he is overawed by the power of the one making war on him, and cuts back on the effort that he puts forth in prayer, he is bound to be enticed by other passions, too.

"In this way, a man will cut himself off little by little from Divine assistance, since one passion succeeds another, and by force of habit he will be led into greater evils, even against his will, having been weakened by the vices that conquered him previously.

"The Devil disdains small sins; yet without them, he cannot lead man into greater sins. Evils, just like good things, mutually reinforce one another, urging one who is guilty of them to advance to yet greater evils."

C. From Palladios

1. A certain monk, who was dwelling in the inner desert, had a great love of silence. His sole work at all times was to occupy himself in prayer, hymnody, and contemplation, and he was vouchsafed many revelations, sometimes when awake and at other times during sleep. Through this way of life, he had practically attained to immortality and incorporeality (*cf.* I St. Timothy 6:12). He paid no heed at all to his diet or the maintenance of his body, but, ever since leaving the world and coming to live in the desert, had cast all of his care upon God once and for all and, full of hope in God, took no account of his bodily needs.

2. As a reward for such steadfast faith, God provided him with bread through an Angel every two or three days. Whenever the ascetic perceived that his body was in need of nourishment, he would go into his cave and find the heavenly bread there. He would thank the Master and fulfill his bodily needs. He would then derive enjoyment once more, as usual, from his hymns, prayers, and contemplations, cleaving unwaveringly to these, ever delighting in them and being gladdened thereby. He flourished spiritually day by day and advanced in love for God and boldness before Him, already having the better life almost within his grasp. Thus did he spend his days.

3. Trusting in himself, therefore, and gradually relaxing his ascetical struggles, convinced that he had become passionless, he fell prey to a

demonic ruse, by which he would have been completely overcome and would have succumbed to an astonishing fall, had not the Lord, in His incomparable mercy, come to his aid.

4. Emboldened thus by his way of life, and supposing himself to be superior to many others, since he had been vouchsafed such spiritual gifts and had grown old in asceticism, after a short while there arose in him, at first, a little slackness, of which even he, for all of his long years of asceticism, had almost no inkling, but which subsequently increased to the point that he became fully aware of it. For he was more sluggish in rising from sleep for his customary hymnody and prayers; his prayer was not as prolonged and undistracted as before; his body demanded more rest; his mind began to stoop towards earthly concerns; and his thoughts started to wander.

5. Thereafter, certain unseemly thoughts germinated in the subconscious recesses of his soul; but his habitual inclination towards loftier realities quickly led his mind away from these and drew it, instead, up to the things of God.

6. Because the monk did not expel the aforementioned symptoms of his diminished resistance to evil and did not wake up with any resolve to remedy his problem—perhaps regarding it as trivial and not taking account of the fact that small sins, when left unattended, gravely impair the zeal of ascetic strugglers—the evil increased in him and inappropriate thoughts assailed him more frequently; and only with difficulty did he free himself from them. In time, the flame of concupiscence was kindled within him and was making his heart grow warm.

7. And so, the ascetic began to give in to passion, while shameful thoughts overcame his mind and tried to lead him back to the world. Yet he restrained himself, turning to his customary prayer and hymnody. After this, he went into his cave, where he found bread set out as before, but not pure, as was previously the case. It was grimy and neglected, as if it had been nibbled on by mice. Astounded at this, he became sorrowful and groaned, but partook of it, nonetheless, and regained his strength. It was now the third night since the commencement of this evil, and the warfare was becoming more severe. Lust was consuming him with greater intensity and his thoughts suggested to him that a

woman was present and actually lying with him. When he arose, he went about his hymns and prayers as usual, but no longer had pure thoughts; rather, his mind whirled hither and thither, captivated by unseemly images.

8. After passing that day, too, in this way, he returned to his cave in the evening, feeling in need of bread. He found the bread in its usual place, but completely spoiled and as if nibbled upon by dogs and mice, with a few crumbs left over as scraps. Utterly depressed, he groaned and lamented, though not sufficiently to check his disordered thoughts. He ate some of the leftover scraps, though not as much as he wanted. He went to lie down, but could not get any rest; instead, thoughts besieged him from all sides and immediately tried to lead him away from his cave, making him a captive to the world. When he arose, he departed back to the world, journeying through the desert by night. He kept walking the entire night, and on the following day, still at a great distance from civilization, he looked all around him to see whether there was a monastery where he could go and get some rest.

9. When he came across an *asketerion*, he approached and was warmly welcomed by the brethren. Looking upon him as their own Father, the monks washed his feet, which after such a long time had become very dirty. They then said a prayer, set out a meal, and asked him to partake with them; he did so, recovering somewhat.

10. The brothers then entreated the ascetic to tell them something for their salvation—in what ways could they save themselves from the snares of the Devil and how they could overcome shameful thoughts. The Elder offered them much advice about asceticism and wrestling with thoughts, adding that those who engage in ascetic struggles must eagerly persevere in toils, in the hope of future good things and the enjoyment of the heavenly homeland, to which they will shortly depart.

11. When he had finished dispensing advice, he looked inside himself for a moment and pondered on how, while advising others, he had no one to advise him. Recognizing that he had been defeated by the Devil, he quickly arose and ran back to the desert. Entering his old cave, he put on sackcloth, sprinkled himself with ashes, and lay on the ground, groaning from the depths of his heart and bewailing his sin.

12. As he bemoaned his fall and confessed his sins to God, he begged forgiveness, not rising from the ground or ceasing to groan and lament until, becoming weary and falling asleep, he heard in a dream the voice of an Angel saying to him: "God has accepted your repentance and has had mercy on you. Make sure that you do not let yourself be deceived in the future. The brothers to whom you gave advice will come to console you and will bring you items of food as gifts. Accept these gifts and partake of them with the brothers. From now on, you will receive your bread from them. Give thanks for this to God forever."

13. Thereafter, he passed the remainder of his life in spiritual mourning, deprived of that Divine fare.

D. From St. Maximos*

1. "Turn away from evil, and do good" (Psalm 33:15). This means: fight your enemies, so as to diminish the passions; and also, fight so as to seek after the virtues; remain thereafter in wakefulness, so that you might preserve them. This is also the meaning of "cultivating" and "keeping" (Genesis 2:15).**

2. A certain young monk, who lived not far away from Abba Anthony, saw some Elders going to visit the Abba. Noticing that they were becoming weary as they walked along the road, he ordered some wild asses to help them. In obedience to him, these animals came and conveyed the Elders to St. Anthony. The Elders related to the Saint the miracle which that young man had performed for them. Abba Anthony said to them: "To me, this monk is like a ship loaded with many goods, but I do not know whether he will reach the harbor."

After some time had elapsed, Abba Anthony, while sitting with his disciples, suddenly began to weep and lament and pull at his hair. When they saw this, his disciples went up to him and asked him: "What has happened, for you to lament with such emotion?" The Elder replied to them: "A mighty pillar of the Church has just fallen" (he was referring to the young monk); "but go to him and see what has happened."

They went and found him sitting on a rush mat, lamenting over the sin that he had committed. When he saw the Elder's disciples, he said to them: "Tell your Elder to beseech God that He grant me just ten days, during which time I hope to correct myself." The disciples departed, and the brother died within five days.

3. Abba Bessarion said: "When we abase ourselves, let us be attentive, lest some unspiritual joy steal over us and we glory therein, leaving our hearts unguarded and surrendering ourselves to warfare. For God often shows mercy to us on account of our weaknesses and turns Satan away from us; but if, out of negligence, we cast aside our fear of Satan and his traps, we are immediately handed over to temptations again."

* Sections 2-3 are from the alphabetical collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*—*Editors.*

** This is an allusion to the commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve when He placed them in Paradise: "And the Lord God took the man whom He had formed, and placed him in the garden of delight, to cultivate and keep it" (Genesis 2:15)—*Trans.*

Hypothesis X

That we should examine ourselves, so as to correct our mistakes and increase our good deeds.

A. From the Life of St. Synkletike

1. The Blessed Synkletike said: "I know a servant of God who lived virtuously. He stayed in his cell, observing the assaults of thoughts and counting them, noting down which attacked first and which second, how long each attack lasted, and whether it lagged behind or outran those of the previous day. In this way, he discerned with precision the Grace of God, his own endurance and progress, and the destruction of the enemy.

2. "We must accept such rules as these and keep them. For, if those occupied with temporal matters examine their affairs each day, rejoicing over advances and gains and grieving over losses, much more does it behoove us, who trade in what is truly precious, to keep vigil and to desire to acquire more spiritual goods; and if it becomes evident that the Enemy has stolen even a small portion of our goods, to be distressed and bewail our loss. We must not give way to despair or throw everything away on account of a single mistake.

3. "You possess ninety-nine sheep; search for the one that is lost. Do not hesitate to rectify one mistake, and do not flee from the Master, lest the bloodsucking Devil capture the entire flock of your good deeds and destroy it, finding it bereft of the Master's protection. Do not desert your post because of one mistake; the Master is good and accepts you whenever you return to Him. Be zealous to amend that one mistake through genuine repentance."

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Nisthero said: "A monk must take stock of himself every evening and morning and say: 'Which of those things that God wills have I done, and which of those things that He wills have I not done?'

He should pass his whole life in this way."

2. Abba Moses asked Abba Silouan: "Can a man make a new beginning every day?" The Elder replied: "If he is a true laborer, he can make a new beginning at every moment."

3. An Elder said: "If you undertake the ascetic life and experience languor, make a new beginning and do not cease doing this until death; for your spiritual progress depends on the degree and intensity of the effort that you put forth. A feeble effort leads to negligence, whereas an intense effort ensures continence. Therefore, examine yourself each day, week, month, and year, to see whether you have made any progress in silence, in fasting, in prayer, and, above all, in humility. For in this resides true spiritual progress: that you consider yourself more lowly every day, reflecting on the faults into which you constantly fall and reckoning that every man is better than you. Without this kind of thinking, even if a man works miracles, even if he raises the dead, he is far from God."

4. Abba Benjamin said: "Walk the royal path, calculate how many miles you have accomplished, and you will not lose courage."

C. From Abba Isaiah

1. Think every day about the ways in which you have sinned; and if you pray to God concerning these sins, He will forgive you them. Always scrutinize yourself here on earth, to see where you fall short, and you will not experience the agony of fear at the time of your death. Prepare yourself to answer to God, and you will do His will. Ask each day what passion you have conquered, but do not trust in yourself; for it was God Who had mercy on you and gave you the power to overcome it.

2. When you wake up each day, remember that you will give an account to God for every deed, word, and thought; then you will not sin against Him, but fear of God will abide in you.

D. From St. Ephraim

1. Brethren, we are spiritual merchants, resembling worldly mer-

chants, who tally their profits and losses every day and who, if they find that they have suffered any losses, are eager and solicitous to recoup what they have lost.

2. You, too, should be doing this, my beloved; you should compute your spiritual commerce with precision every day, both in the evening and in the morning. In the evening, when you enter into your heart, reflect and say to yourself: "Did I anger God in anything? Did I speak an idle word? Was I indifferent to the needs of my brother, or did I irritate him? Did I disparage anyone? Was I chanting hymns with my mouth, while my mind was fantasizing about worldly things? Did some carnal desire come over me and did I accept it gladly? Was I absorbed in earthly cares, having completely abandoned the recollection of God?"

3. Ponder on these and other similar things, and if you discover that you have experienced a loss in any of these areas, make haste to recoup your loss. Groan and weep, beseeching God that you not suffer such losses again. In the morning, meditate on these points and say to yourself: "How did I pass this night? Did I gain or lose anything? Did my mind stay awake along with my body? Did my eyes shed spiritual tears? Was I weighed down by sleep while I knelt in prayer? Was I assailed by evil thoughts and, rather than repelling them at once, did I look on them with pleasure?"

4. If, as you scrutinize yourself in this way, you find out that you succumbed to any of the aforementioned temptations, strive to redress the defeat and set a guard over your heart, lest you suffer the same things again. If you always exercise such care, you will preserve your spiritual merchandise by storing it safely in the treasuries of Heaven.

Hypothesis XI

That for a faithful Christian it is hazardous to transgress even a single commandment, since he has received from God the ability to fulfill them all; and that a small evil is very harmful.

A. From the Life of St. Pachomios

1. St. Pachomios the Great said to his disciples: "Tell me, brethren, if a householder owns a house with a hundred rooms, and someone else buys the innermost room from him, what is there to prevent that someone from entering what is by right his own dwelling? So also, if a believer possesses all the fruits of the Spirit and forfeits one of them through his own carelessness and the scheming of the Enemy, being tricked into giving away one of his virtues, will he not be weakened on this score, since he yielded to the Devil of his own free will?

2. "If one does not shake off his negligence or awake from the sleep of indifference, safeguarding himself with vigilance and attentiveness, he will lose all of his virtue through this small infiltration by the Enemy, just as in a battle those who fortify themselves against their foes receive a deadly setback if one section of the line has been left exposed, thus putting their lives at risk. Therefore, each of us must guard himself and adorn himself with all of the virtues; for one who overlooks the least virtue incurs no small loss."

B. From the *Gerontikon*

A brother asked Abba Poimen: "Can a man have confidence in one single virtue?" The Elder replied: "Abba John the Short said: 'I prefer a man to have a small share in all of the virtues than to cleave exclusively to one alone.'"

C. From St. Isaiah

1. Brethren, all of us are obligated to fulfill all of the virtues according to our ability—the lowly in accordance with his lowliness and the

An Angel of the Lord and St. Pachomios

great in accordance with his greatness; for those who cast their gifts into the treasury were rich, but the Lord of all rejoiced more over the poor widow for her two mites (St. Mark 12:41-44; St. Luke 21:1-2). God is mindful of our intention, and it is with reference to this that He accepts our deeds. Woe, therefore, to the soul that is not willing to flee from every sin, for it will experience many afflictions from those who envy it [the demons—*Trans.*], when they encounter it at times of spiritual combat.

2. When the people of Israel were in Egypt, they ate and drank in abundance, but were in bondage to Pharaoh; and when the Lord sent them help, namely Moses, in order to deliver them from Pharaoh, then did they suffer oppression and tribulation. And despite all of the plagues that the Lord brought upon Pharaoh, Moses did not become confident over the destruction of the Egyptians until the suitable time came, when God said to him: "Yet one more plague will I bring upon Pharaoh" (Exodus 11:1), and "thou shalt say to him, 'Let my people go, for I will smite thy first-born'" (*cf.* Exodus 11:5). Moses then took courage, and God said to him: "Speak secretly into the ears of My people, and each man shall ask of his neighbor and each woman of her neighbor gold and silver vessels and raiment" (Exodus 11:2). "Place them on the necks of your children and despoil the Egyptians" (Exodus 3:22). The Israelites used these jewels in constructing the Tabernacle of Testimony.

3. According to the Elders, the vessels and the raiment are the senses, which are enslaved to our Enemy (the Devil). Therefore, if a man does not withdraw his senses completely from the service of the Devil, so that they might bear fruit for God, the protection of Divine peace does not come upon him. The cloud did not overshadow the Tabernacle of Testimony while it was still unfinished, but only once it was completed.* Likewise, while the Temple of Solomon was being built, as long as it remained incomplete, the cloud did not overshadow it; but when it was finished, and when the blood and fat from the whole-burnt offerings were offered to God and He smelt their fragrance, then did the cloud overshadow the House of the Lord.** This means that unless a man loves God with all his strength and all his mind, and cleaves to Him wholeheartedly, the protection of Divine peace does not come upon him.

4. For, just as a ship cannot set sail if it is short of anything among

the necessary provisions, so also it is impossible for the soul to traverse the waves of the passions if it lacks any of the virtues. Likewise, just as a soldier who goes out to fight the enemies of the king cannot resist them if he is missing any of his armor, so also it is impossible for a monk to resist the passions if he lacks any of the virtues. And just as a fortified city that has a breach in any part of its wall is easily captured by the enemy, even if there are sentries at the gates—for they cannot prevent the enemy from entering the city unless the breach in the wall is repaired—so, also, it is impossible for an ascetic monk to stand up to his noetic enemies when he is dominated by some passion.

5. It is not I who say this, but Holy Scripture; for it is written in Genesis: "God said to Noah: 'Thee alone have I seen righteous and perfect in this generation'" (Genesis 7:1). Again, He said to Abraham: "Be blameless before Me, and I will establish an eternal covenant with thee" (Genesis 17:1-2). He gave the same testimony concerning Job (Job 1:8). And when blessing his son Jacob, Isaac asked God to strengthen him to be able to fulfill all of His will: "May my God bless thee, and increase thee, and multiply thee, and thou shalt become gatherings of nations" (Genesis 28:3).

6. Ecclesiastes, teaching us that the least passion destroys all the power of the virtues, says: "Pestilential flies will corrupt a preparation of sweet ointment" (Ecclesiastes 10:1). In the Book of Ezekiel it is written that on whatsoever day the righteous man erreth from his righteousness, I will not remember him (Ezekiel 18:24).*** The Apostle Paul says: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (I Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9). The Apostle James says: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (St. James 2:10).

7. If we wish to learn this also from sacred history, let us recall the example of Achar, who, through his theft from the offerings of Jericho, deprived the entire people of God's help; and Israel could no longer stand up to its enemies or go forth to battle, until it had destroyed Achar (Joshua 7:1-26). We also see Saul toppled from his kingdom, because he took part of the booty of the conquered Amalekites, which, according to Hebrew law, was dedicated to God (I Kings 15:9-26). And, on account of the ignorance of Jonathan, who unknowingly violated the oath of his father Saul, that they should fast that entire day, God did not hearken to

Israel on that day (I Kings 14:24-45).

8. Ananias and his wife Sapphira withheld part of the price of some land that they had sold, lied about it, and instantly fell down at the feet of the Apostles, expiring (Acts 5:1-11). And one can cite many other such examples from both the Old and the New Testaments.**** But the aforementioned examples are sufficient for any sensible person. Let it be known that it is impossible for a man who does evil to do good. But it is possible for a man to do evil on the pretext of doing good, as when he sins and does not repent. If he truly repents, he will not have sinned. For one who has sincerely repented does not divide his day up into hours set aside for God, in which he ought to do good, and hours set aside for the Devil, in which he is entitled to live prodigally; nor does he have a time for piety and a time for iniquity; he is not a servant of God at one time and a servant of the Devil at another time, but is always the same person.

9. "Whosoever committeth sin," says the Lord, "is the servant of sin" (St. John 8:34). A slave of sin cannot serve God, as the unerring Lord Himself says elsewhere in the Gospels: "No man can serve two masters" (St. Matthew 6:24). "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" asks the Apostle Paul; "and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God" (II Corinthians 6:14-16). "Let us cleanse ourselves," he says, "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (II Corinthians 7:1), and then we shall perfect holiness in the love of Christ; that is, we shall accomplish every good deed. For he who avoids the majority of sins, but is dominated by one sin, be it ever so casual, is not free: "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (II St. Peter 2:19). One who is easily overcome by small sins is all the more enslaved to great sins. It is impossible to conquer major passions, if one has not first defeated the more trivial ones.

D. From Abba Mark

1. The Word of God has the same power as His royal authority: it obliges those who hear it to fulfill it, but it also introduces into the heart of the hearer the ability to fulfill it. If this assistance were not given, how

would the Kingdom of Heaven be similar to "leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (St. Luke 13:21)? The mind which gladly receives the Word of the Lord hides it in our tripartite nature, by which I mean body, spirit, and soul, as the Apostle says (I Thessalonians 5:23); it has gathered into one leaven of faith all the subtlety of its thoughts, which, like flour, are diffusely scattered, in the expectation that the leaven will become entirely like the Word that acts in it.

2. The truth of this can be seen from the fact that Christ called the Apostles clean, on account of the Word which they heard (St. John 15:3), in that they availed themselves of the power associated with the Word, in order to put it into practice; "for the word of God is living and active"(Hebrews 4:12). For this reason, Christ condemned those who did not make use of such power as unbelieving, saying: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin" (St. John 15:22).

3. All of us who have been baptized, therefore, are obligated to believe in Christ completely and to carry out all of His commandments, since we have received from Him the power to carry out this work. This does not mean that we should fulfill the commandments one by one, one-sidedly, but that we should accomplish the particular through the general, thus fulfilling all of them in a short time, yet without disregarding those which pertain to individual cases.

4. The following are examples of particular commandments: "Give to every man that asketh of thee" (St. Luke 6:30), "Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again" (St. Luke 6:30), and "From him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (St. Matthew 5:42). Examples of general commandments, which apply to all men, are: "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor" (St. Matthew 19:21) and "Take up thy cross, and follow Me" (St. Mark 10:21). By "cross" is meant patience in the face of the afflictions that assail us.

5. Therefore, he who gives all of his goods away to the poor and takes up his cross has fulfilled all of the aforementioned particular commandments at a single stroke. Again, Scripture says: "Thou shalt not fornicate" (Hosea 3:3), "thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:13). In addition, it says: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing

that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (II Corinthians 10:5). He who casts down imaginations (that is, expels shameful thoughts) excludes all of the causes of sin.

6. If, then, we have been buried with Christ in Baptism (Romans 6:4), and "he that is dead is freed from sin" (Romans 6:7), and sin no longer reigns in us, we ought to carry out all of the commandments, so that we might acquire the perfection given to us through baptism. If we fail to do this, we are faithless; for faith consists not only in being baptized into Christ, but also in fulfilling His commandments. If, therefore, we neglect His commandments and pursue pleasures by our own free choice, we are, naturally, ruled by sin, thus returning, like a dog, to our own vomit (II St. Peter 2:22), as Scripture says.

7. For in Baptism man is set free by the gift of Christ, not in such a way that it carries him along by force, but so that he is able to perform the works of freedom (that is, the virtues), if he so wills. However, according to his own will, he abides where his love lies, even if he has been baptized, since his free will is not subject to constraint. For neither God nor Satan violates a man's personal will after Baptism. Therefore, when Scripture says that "the violent take the Kingdom of Heaven by force" (St. Matthew 11:12), it is referring to our own will, meaning that each of us should force his own will, after Baptism, not to turn towards evil but to cleave to what is good. For, if we were under compulsion from demonic powers, it would certainly be possible for God, Who has freed us, to force us not to incline towards evil.

8. But this, in fact, is not the case. Rather, God has delivered us, through Baptism, from the compulsion of servitude, for He annulled sin through the Cross and laid down for us commandments that give us freedom. Whether or not we transgress these commandments depends, by God's leave, on our own will. Insofar as we fulfill the commandments, we signify the extent of our love for the One Who has freed us; insofar as we disregard or violate them, we demonstrate our attachment to the pleasures of life.

9. Therefore, with regard to those who say, "We want to fulfill the commandments but are unable to do so, since we under the sway of sin even after Baptism," let them know that the reason why they again become subject, even after Baptism, to the influence of evil is not that Holy

Baptism is imperfect and does not bestow complete freedom from sin and the capacity to carry out all of the commandments. For "the law of the Spirit of life [in Christ Jesus—*Trans.*] hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2); that is, it has given us complete deliverance from sin.

10. It is up to us whether we bind ourselves again to sin through an inclination towards evil or remain free by fulfilling the commandments. If a sin, that is, an evil thought, holds a man's mind in captivity, even though one detests that sin***** (for this does happen, and I do not deny it), nonetheless, this is not a remnant of Adam's sin but the result of our violating the commandments after Baptism. When, after Baptism, we are capable of fulfilling all of the commandments but fail to perform them, then, even if unwillingly, we are held in the grip of sin, until we entreat God through repentance, by living in accordance with all of His commandments—in which case He will obliterate our sin of violating the commandments.

11. There are two causes of evildoing, and they both derive from us. The first cause is proportionate to our omission of the commandments;• the second cause, which maintains a relentless hold over us, has to do with evils that we commit after Baptism. Only God can remove this cause of evil, when we propitiate Him through almsgiving, prayer, and the patient endurance of tribulations—virtues which, without our realizing it, are furnished by the perfect Grace given to us through Baptism. He who engages in spiritual combat practices self-restraint in all things and does not desist until the Lord destroys the "seed from Babylon" (Jeremiah 27:16).

12. Let us say hypothetically that there are twelve shameful passions. If you willingly indulge in any one of them, that passion does duty for the other eleven. Do not leave any sin unobliterated, no matter how slight it may be, lest it subsequently entice you into greater evil.

13. When you begin to be involved in some evil, do not say: "It will not conquer me"; for to the extent that you are involved in it, you have already been conquered. Everything that occurs starts out small and gradually grows as it receives nourishment. Wickedness operates like an intricate net. One who is partially entangled in it, if he is careless, eventually becomes completely enmeshed. No single virtue by itself opens

the natural door of salvation for us, unless all of the virtues are acquired in the proper order, since they are mutually interdependent. He who is easily overcome by minor faults will, of necessity, be enslaved by major passions, whereas he who overcomes the former will be able, with the Lord's help, to resist the latter, too.

E. From St. Diadochos

1. Self-control is the generic name for all of the virtues; therefore, one who exercises self-control must do so in all things. For just as the whole of a man's body becomes disfigured when one member, no matter how small it may be, is removed from it, so also he who neglects one virtue without realizing it destroys all of his self-control.

2. It is necessary, therefore, to cultivate not only those virtues which pertain to the body, but also those which have the capacity to purify our inner man. For what profit is there in preserving one's body in virginity if one lets his soul commit adultery with the demon of disobedience?

3. Or, how will he who has refrained from gluttony and all bodily desire receive a crown, if he has not sedulously fought against conceit and pride and cannot endure even the slightest affliction?

4. For the scales of justice on the Day of Judgment are going to reward with the light of righteousness only those who have accomplished works of righteousness in a spirit of humility.••

F. From St. Maximos

1. After His Resurrection, the Lord said to the Apostles: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (St. Matthew 28:19-20). Hence, every man baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is bound to observe all that has been commanded. It is for precisely this reason that the Lord yoked observance of all His commandments to right faith, knowing that it is impossible for one divorced from the other to save a man: "Faith without works is dead" (St. James 2:20).

2. For this reason, David, having right faith in God, said: "Therefore I have directed myself according to all Thy commandments; I have hated every unrighteous way" (Psalm 118:128). For all of the commandments have been given to us by the Lord that we might oppose every unrighteous way; and if one commandment is disregarded, it will assuredly open up the way of wickedness that is contrary to it. The Lord has given us the power to keep all of His commandments, for He said: "Behold, I give unto you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (St. Luke 10:19).

3. When the Apostle Paul received this power and authority, he said, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1); and again, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24); and again: "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14). All of the commandments, many though they be, are summed up in one sentence: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with...all thy strength, ...and thy neighbor as thyself" (St. Luke 10:27). Therefore, he who struggles, if he holds fast to these words, will fulfill all of the commandments together.

G. From Abba Isaac

1. The passions resemble small dogs which are in the habit of hanging around outside butcher shops, but run away at the mere sound of a voice. However, when one disregards them, they rush on you like enormous lions.

2. Set a small desire at naught as soon as it begins to be aroused in you, lest you be consumed by its intense heat when it flares up; for the attention and patience that we exhibit in small temptations drive away the danger that comes from great temptations. If one is not victorious in less significant matters, how will he prevail in matters of great importance?

3. Show God your patience in dealing with small temptations, lest He demand great sacrifices of you. Let these small things be a criterion for you, so that through them you might cast down the adversary and make it impossible for him to bring you into greater temptations.

4. If an ascetic cannot be persuaded by the Enemy, when the latter suggests that he go even just five paces outside his cell, will he ever be persuaded to depart from the desert or go near a village? And if he does not consent to peek out through the window of his hermitage at the prompting of the Devil, how will he listen to the latter when he suggests that he leave his cell?

5. If one can barely be persuaded to partake of a very small amount of food in the evening, how will he be ensnared by thoughts of negligence and gluttony to eat before the proper hour? How can someone who is embarrassed even to eat his fill of frugal monastic fare possibly yearn for expensive foods? And if a man cannot be persuaded to look upon his own body, how could he be curious about the beauty of other people's bodies?

6. Such is the discretion involved in struggling against the Enemy and resisting him; through this discretion, the wise do not allow themselves to be exposed to great struggles and conflicts, but, by exhibiting patience in small matters, preserve themselves from undergoing great toils. One who from the outset makes light of minor temptations, and is overcome by them, gives occasion to the Enemy to wage war against him in major temptations. For example, the Devil first strives to obliterate the unceasing prayer of the heart, and then persuades a monk to neglect the fixed hours of prayer and the corporeal component of his cell rule.

7. In another case, the Devil attempts to enervate his mind to make him eat before the proper hour, and then, after destroying his abstinence, makes war on him in order to lead him into intemperance and profligacy. In another instance, he suggests to a man that he consider it an entirely trivial matter to look upon the nakedness of his body or on the comeliness of some part of his body when he is undressing, or standing before a stretch of water,••• or sitting down in order to satisfy a need of nature; in like manner, he suggests that he unguardedly put his hand inside his clothing and touch his privates.

8. If, in any of these cases, he persuades a man to obey him, he then suggests to him other greater and more serious sins, and the ascetic who previously safeguarded his mind, reckoning even a small distraction to be a loss, then opens himself up to bitter and grievous occasions for sin.

For thoughts resemble water in a conduit: provided they are confined on all sides, they proceed in an orderly manner; but if they find an outlet, they will then destroy the barrier and wreak great havoc.

9. The Enemy always stands opposite us, attentively watching to see which of our sensory doors we have left open out of negligence, so that he can enter into us. In his craftiness, he unleashes his arrows against us through whichever door he finds unprotected. But let us exchange great labors for small ones, and we shall easily prevail over him.

* "And the cloud covered the Tabernacle of Testimony, and the Tabernacle was filled with the glory of the Lord" (Exodus 40:34).

** "And it came to pass, when the priests departed out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house; and the priests could not stand to minister on account of the cloud, because the glory of the Lord filled the house" (III Kings 8:10-11).

*** "But when the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, according to all the transgressions which the transgressor hath wrought, none of his righteousness which he hath wrought shall be at all remembered" (Ezekiel 18:24).

**** That is, examples which show that a man cannot be perfect as long as he has certain weaknesses or falls into passion, no matter how slight they might be—*Trans.*

***** "For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Romans 7:15).

• That is, the greater our transgression of the commandments, the more drastically evil acts within us—*Trans.*

•• In rendering the final paragraph of this passage, we have chosen to substitute the version contained in the *Φιλοκαλία* (Athens: Aster, 1974), Vol. I, p. 247—*Editors.*

••• In which case he sees a reflection of his body in the water—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XII

That monastics and devout lay people who have received Divine knowledge are subjected to great chastisements even for minor sins.

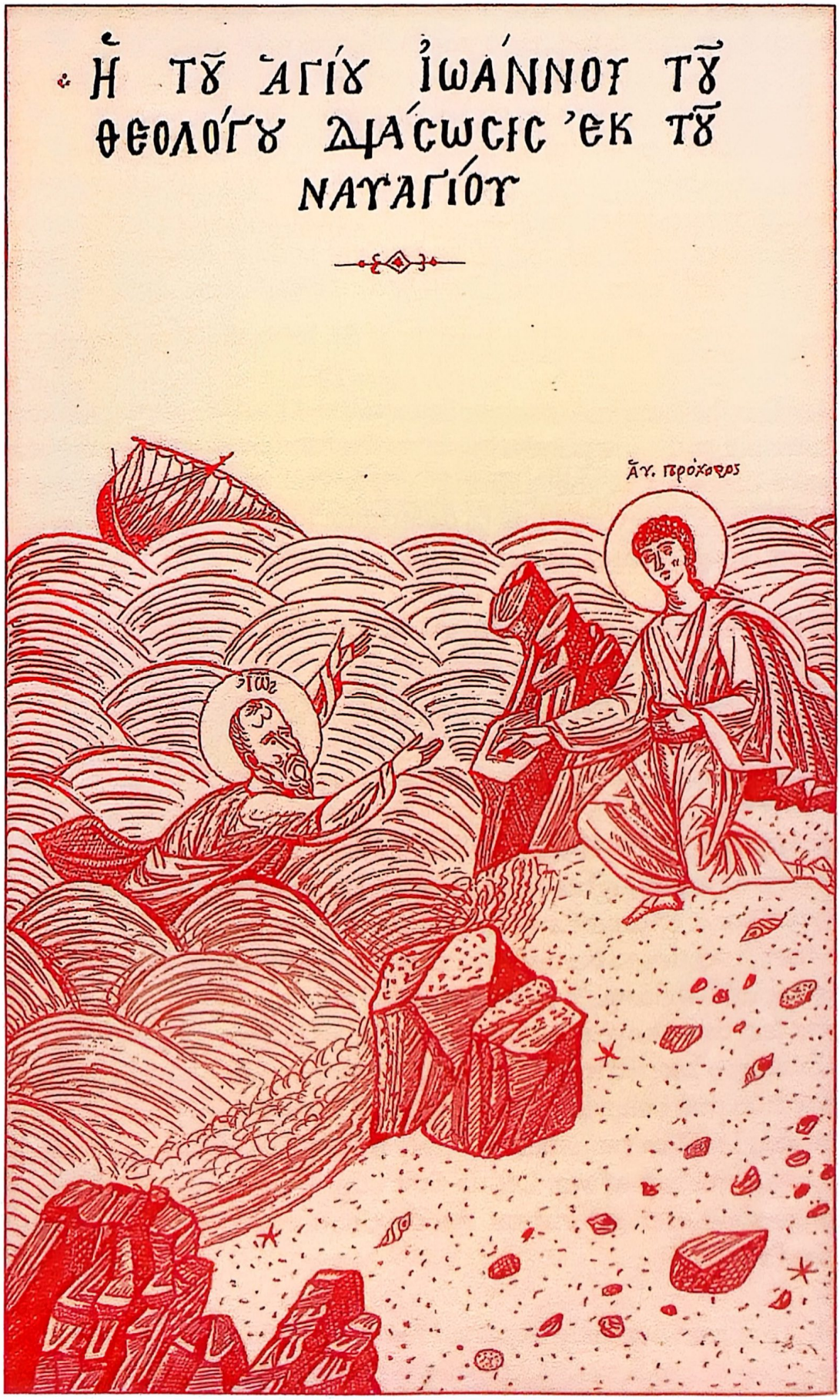
A. From the Narrative of the Travels of St. John the Theologian

1. After the Lord's Ascension, when the Apostles were gathered in Gethsemane and were pondering how they should go into all the world to make disciples of the nations, as He had commanded them (St. Matthew 28:19), they cast lots to determine in which region each of the Apostles would preach. It fell to John's lot to go to Asia.

2. John took this result badly, evaluating the outcome of his mission by human reasoning rather than by faith, since he reckoned that it would be difficult to recall this region from the idolatry to which it was everywhere given and convert it to Christ; and for this reason, he fell into hesitation.

3. He soon realized that he had sinned against the Lord out of the weakness of his thoughts and betrayed Him, succumbing, as he should not have done, to doubt and hesitation. He wept and fell down, asking the other Apostles to beseech the Lord to forgive him. He said to them, weeping and sighing: "I have sinned, Fathers and brothers, in resenting the fact that I have been allotted Asia, all but becoming weak in faith and failing to keep in mind the Lord's prophecy, that 'all things are possible to him that believeth' (St. Mark 9:23). Hence, God has made known to me that I will be punished severely for my lack of faith by being subjected to a mishap at sea. Let us first offer fervent prayer to God, and then we shall each set out for the destination which the Lord has appointed for us."

4. After praying, they departed for their allotted places, each of them taking one of the Seventy Apostles with him as an assistant. John took Prochoros along with him, and together they went down to Joppa. On the following day, they embarked on a ship and set sail for Asia.



St. John the Theologian rescued from shipwreck

5. John began to weep and said to Prochoros, while no one else was listening (for they were sitting in the remotest part on the ship): "Prochoros, my son, I am to be assailed by tribulation and peril on the sea and my spirit will be sorely chastised; but God has not disclosed to me whether I shall live or die. Now, if you survive, go to Asia, and when you reach Ephesus, wait for me there for three months. If I show up during that time, we will carry out the ministry that God has assigned to us; if not, return to Jerusalem, to James, the Lord's brother, and do whatever he tells you." It was about the tenth hour of the day when John said this.*

6. Thereupon, a fierce gale was stirred up and the ship was shattered by the force of the waves. Everyone fell into the sea and, by God's Providence, each of the other forty-six passengers grabbed a piece of furniture or wood and was brought to dry land unharmed; John alone was left behind in the ocean.

7. Prochoros set out from Seleucia—for it was there that he had been cast ashore—and reached Asia, after journeying for forty days. While passing through a coastal village called Mareotis, he gazed out towards the sea and beheld a man being washed up by an enormous and lofty wave that had broken upon the shore.

8. Prochoros ran to assist the castaway, but John stood up before he reached him. When they recognized each other, they embraced, weeping tears of joy and thanking God for His solicitude in bringing about their deliverance and recovery. John then regained his composure a little and related to Prochoros how he has been miraculously preserved by the power of God for forty days and nights, being carried about on the waves of the sea in a way that he could not explain. From this experience he learned that we must trust in God, rather than in the weakness of our human reasonings, and must obey His commands without hesitation.

9. The Blessed Epiphanios said: "In the case of repentant sinners like the harlot and the publican, God remits the principal; but He demands interest of the righteous, as He said to the Apostles: 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven' (St. Matthew 5:20)."**

10. An Elder said: "God bears with the sins of people who live in the world, but does not tolerate the sins of desert-dwellers. One who lives in the world has many excuses for sinning, but he who has left the world, provided he keeps watch over himself and struggles, does not have any of those external temptations."***

* As is well known, Orientals and Byzantines used a different reckoning for the twenty-four-hour period. Sunset was always at the twelfth hour; consequently, the tenth hour of the day in this story indicates a time close to sunset.

** From the alphabetical collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*—*Editors*

*** From the anonymous collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*—*Editors*.

Hypothesis XIII

That we must courageously resist listlessness and demonic dejection, and concerning patience.

A. From the Life of St. Synkletike

1. The Blessed Synkletike said to her assembled nuns: "One kind of sorrow is beneficial, but another kind is destructive. Now, one aspect of the profitable kind of sorrow consists in sighing over one's own sins, and another in sighing over the spiritual ignorance of one's neighbor. One also sighs lest she deviate from her purpose and out of anxiety to attain to the most perfect virtue.

2. "There is also a kind of sorrow suggested by the Enemy, which is totally irrational and which some call listlessness [*ἀκηδία—Trans.*].* We must drive away this kind of sorrow chiefly by prayer and psalmody, reckoning that no one weighed down with cares [*ἄφρων—Trans.*]** in this life is free from sorrow.

3. "For, Scripture says: 'The whole head acheth, and the whole heart is sad' (Isaiah 1:5). In this concise phrase, the Holy Spirit has encapsulated the monastic life and secular life. By 'headache' He describes the monastic way of life, for the head signifies the principal part of the soul, as is said elsewhere: 'The eyes of a wise man are in his head' (Ecclesiastes 2:14); for, the faculty of discernment, it is said, resides in the head. 'Ache' [*πόνος—Trans.*] signifies that all growth in virtue derives from labors [*ἐκ πόνων—Trans.*].

4. "By 'sadness of heart' the Holy Spirit indicates the instability and hardship of worldly life; for just as the heart is ever-changing, and is said to be the seat of anger and sorrow, so also those who live in the world are never completely delivered from instability and sorrow. When they are not extolled, they are upset. They waste away in craving other people's goods. When poor, they are disgruntled; when rich, they become maddened, since their worries and the need to protect their property do not permit them to get any rest.

5. "Let us, therefore, not be led astray by the thought that worldly people are free from anxieties; for by comparison with us, they are under greater strain than we.*** What I am saying is not applicable to everyone, but only to those pursuing the monastic life. Just as, in the case of animals, there is not one kind of food that suits all species, so also the same teaching is not profitable for all men; for as Scripture says, one should not put new wine into old bottles (*cf.* St. Matthew 9:17). There is one kind of fare for those counted worthy of Divine vision and knowledge, another kind for those engaged in asceticism and the active life, and yet another kind for those living in the world.

6. "Just as some animals are terrestrial, others are aquatic, and others are volitant, so also it is with people: some walk the middle path of life, such as terrestrial animals, others gaze towards the heights, such as birds, while others hide themselves in the waters of sin, such as fish. About those in the last category Scripture says: 'I am come into the depths of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed me' (Psalm 68:3). Let us furnish ourselves with eagles' wings and always reach out for higher things."

7. Brother, have complete patience in the work to which you have been called and do not become a listless person who hates labors done for the Lord's sake; for if we are prisoners of God our Savior, let us not be ashamed of the fetters of the afflictions that we suffer for His sake (*cf.* II St. Timothy 1:16). On the contrary, let us endure this bondage with joy, in expectation of His coming**** from Heaven, that He might number us with the choir of the Saints.*****

8. Those who share in His sufferings will also share in the consolation that He bestows (II Corinthians 1:7). But if anyone is disgruntled at the laboriousness of his work, let him consider how many people there are in the world who suffer from gout in their feet or their hands, not only rich, but also poor, and who enjoy no respite either by night or by day, since they are constantly racked by their intense pain and held fast, as it were, in the fetters of this malady.

9. As for us, let us acquire voluntary pain and freely-chosen patience for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let us, therefore, keep our hearts ever steadfast. If some small degree of inertia should come over us, let us not immediately become fainthearted, but let us compel our-

selves, like a stouthearted wayfarer: when he feels weak while on the road, he does not abandon the goal of his journey, however long that may be, but encourages himself by saying, "Just a little farther and you will come to the inn, where you can rest." And the Lord, seeing his efforts, strengthens him and alleviates his difficulties; for, hesitancy and sluggishness are the cause of penury, not only in spiritual gifts, but also in bodily needs.

10. Therefore, let us not be remiss, brothers, in serving each other for the Lord's sake. Many who have fallen in love with young girls have chosen to become slaves for the sake of their beloved.• Let us not sit listlessly in our cells, but let us remember that the Holy Martyrs were shut up in prison cells in iron fetters, among many other torments.

11. Therefore, let us not flee from the narrow confines of our cells; for God is not so unjust as to forget your toil (*cf.* Hebrews 6:10), but in return for the darkness that you endure when sitting in your cell, He will shine the light of truth on you, as it is written: "Unto the upright there hath arisen light in the darkness" (Psalm 111:4). Let us not be fainthearted in doing our work, but let us remember that many of the Saints were sent to the mines for the sake of the Lord. Now, had we been living in those times, would we, I wonder, have given up our lives on account of the torments and agonies to which we were subjected?

12. Let us always remember, brethren, the benefactions of our God, Who has fashioned us and given us increase and Who nourishes us and protects us in every way,•• Who "bringeth winds out of His treasuries" to minister to us, Who "bringeth up clouds from the ends of the earth" (Psalm 134:7) to serve us, Who multiplies cattle, birds, and fish to serve our kind, Who has made the sun to give light by day and the moon and the stars to give light by night for the sake of our kind (*cf.* Psalm 135:8-9), and Who has saved us through the Mystery of His Precious Cross. Let us, therefore, serve Him in much fear and trembling and in good hope, since we are sojourners in this life. As Scripture says: "I am a sojourner...and a stranger, as all my fathers were" (Psalm 38:13).

13. Brother, persevere in the place where you live and struggle against negligence; it is not by moving from place to place that you tame the passions, but by keeping your mind attentive. We have need of patience, in order that, after we have done the Will of God, we might re-

ceive the promise (Hebrews 10:36). He who wallows in listlessness is as far removed from patience as a sick man is from health. Virtue is made known in patience, not in torpor, and patience is replenished and strengthened when the mind is occupied with Divine vision and meditation on what we expect to enjoy in the age to come.

14. The mind receives strength when it is nourished from this source, just as the body is strengthened by material food. If the mind has no share in such Grace and dignity, it becomes truly poor and infirm. Therefore, shake off your attachment to material things, devote your mind to that Divine work, and you will have no need to move from place to place or interrupt your meditation on the things of God with these peregrinations, which you undertake without good reason and without the permission of your Superiors. For, "the Kingdom of Heaven is within us" (*cf.* St. Luke 17:21), as the Lord says.

15. Consider, my beloved, how many people in the world suffer different kinds of privation. Some, in desperate straits, mortgage their possessions; others have lost their children because they were captured by foreign potentates and sold into slavery, and ever since have been in bondage to still more deplorable masters or to barbarians in a foreign land; others, being poor and lacking even their daily sustenance, have been abandoned on the squares and streets of cities, clad in torn and filthy rags, enduring additional misery from cold and heat—and some of these are tormented by terrible diseases. I refrain from mentioning those who are shut up in prisons and doing hard labor in mines. Is it not a great thing for us that we have this shelter which God has bestowed on us, as well as freedom from worldly affairs and troubles?

16. Remember these things and you will be thankful to God for the innumerable benefactions which He has performed and continues to perform for us. And for those who seem to be successful in life, what good does the world offer, except the countless toils and cares of life? Has someone gotten married? That is the beginning of his cares. Has he fathered a son? This is another source of anxiety. Has another son been born to him? Yet more anxiety. Has one son died? He has left his parents with inconsolable sorrow. And if the one who remains alive turns out to be a good-for-nothing, his parents grieve more over him than over the one who has died.

17. Finally, when the hour of death comes to a man, the dying man is afflicted and inwardly perturbed more on account of the compassion that he feels towards his wife and children than by the ordeal of death, reckoning that he is going to leave behind a widow and orphans. But Christ's yoke, which is easy and very light (St. Matthew 11:30) has freed us from all of these things. The memory of death is also very conducive to the averting of listlessness. Therefore, if one is bothered by listlessness, he should first beseech God to grant him both patience and forbearance, and next he should entreat his soul, saying: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why dost thou disquiet me? Hope thou in God, for I shall praise Him, the salvation of my countenance and my God" (Psalm 42:5).

18. Are we to dwell in this world forever? Listen to him who says: "I am a sojourner...and a stranger, as all my fathers were" (Psalm 38:12). Consider those who lived before you in the monastery in which you sojourn and know that, just as they passed on from this life, so must we who have sojourned here depart by God's Will, and that true life exists after death. For this reason, the Prophet, in his yearning for that life, cries out to God: "As the hart panteth after the springs of water, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.... When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" (Psalm 41:2-3).

19. The Saints regarded the present life as a prison; hence, in another place, Scripture says: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Thy word" (St. Luke 2:29). In this way, too, the Apostle "had a desire to depart and to be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23). For if a man hates this world and its deceit, and longs for the things of Heaven, he makes himself a slave to the Lord with all of his heart and soul and seeks to depart, so as to enjoy those things for which he longs. For this reason, negligence and listlessness will never prevail over him. But to the extent that the soul contemplates earthly things, the various lusts and vain pleasures of this world that are brought into the soul through thoughts enervate its vigor—and this is why one becomes negligent.

B. From Antiochos (author of the *Pandects*)

1. The demon of listlessness is exceedingly fearful and oppressive. He assaults a monk around the sixth hour of the day, producing anguish

in him and causing him to hate the place in which he dwells, and even more the brothers who live with him, every task, and even the reading of Holy Scripture.

2. While reading, he yawns frequently, is readily inclined to fall asleep, rubs his eyes, stretches out his hands, and, averting his eyes from his book, stares at the walls. He resumes what he was doing previously, reads a little, opens up the book, scrutinizes the beginnings and endings of various chapters, counts the pages, and calculates the number of quaternions. He censures or praises the script and the decoration of the book, then rolls up the book,••• places it under his pillow, and lies down to sleep. But his sleep is not deep, for the hunger which listlessness induces in him arouses his soul and does not allow him to sleep for long.

3. After a short while, then, he arises and finds out what time it is by gazing intently at the sun's rays. In expectation of the mealtime, he keeps his ears pricked to hear the *semantron* that summons the monks to the *trapeza*. As soon as he hears it, he becomes very eager and says to himself, "Bravo, bravo."

4. A listless monk shows alacrity in performing duties around the monastery, regarding the fulfillment of the passion that dominates him as a commandment that must be obeyed. Just as a sick man is not content with one meal, so also the listless monk does not stick to one task but constantly switches from one task to another and back again. He tries his hand at everything, quickly becoming frustrated, and fails to complete even one task. The listless monk excuses his behavior by saying that he has to visit the sick, converse with spiritual brothers, and celebrate Saints' days and Feast Days; and thus, he fulfills his own agenda. A waterless cloud is pursued by the wind, and a monk who has no stamina is pursued by the spirit of listlessness.

5. A listless monk is all too eager to indulge in idle talk, but has absolutely no enthusiasm for prayer. When reciting the services in his cell, he seeks pretexts for distraction: "This item," he will say, "is not in the right place"; "that item does not need to be here." Oftentimes, he recites a service while devoting himself to handiwork.

6. The eye of a listless monk gazes intently at the windows of his

cell, and in his mind he imagines that people are visiting him. Did the door creak? He leaps up. Did he hear a voice? He peers through the window and does not withdraw therefrom until he grows numb through pressing his nose against it. Listlessness is healed through patient endurance in the face of temptations and by doing everything with assiduity and fear of God.

7. Set a limit for yourself in every task and do not desist until you have completed it. Pray with understanding and concentration, and the spirit of listlessness will flee from you. When you pray, say the words of David with understanding and with feeling and contrition in your soul: "Hear me speedily, O Lord; my spirit waxeth faint. Turn not away Thy countenance from me..., for the enemy hath pursued my soul; he hath set me in darkness, as those that have been long dead; and my spirit hath become listless against me, my heart within me is troubled" (Psalm 142:7, 3-4). Forsake me not, O Lord, but "look Thou upon me, and have mercy upon me," and "work in me a sign unto good, and let them which hate me see, and be ashamed; because Thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me" (Psalm 85:16-17).

C. From Isaiah the Anchorite

Brother, guard yourself against listlessness; for this destroys the fruits that a monk has gained. If you are struggling against a passion, do not become disheartened but cast yourself on God, saying: "I do not have the power to fight against this passion, O Lord; help me, the wretched one." Say this with your whole heart and you will find peace. Do not enter at all into your brother's cell, but stay in your own cell in fear of God, paying attention to your handiwork, studying, and praying. Do not seek to find out whether your brother has done more work than you, or you than he.

D. From St. Mark

If you become listless when afflicted by various kinds of evil, call to mind your departure from this life and the grievous torments of Hell. It is better to cleave to God through prayer and hope (Psalm 72:28) than to recall external things, even if they be beneficial.

E. From Abba Cassian

1. When the fearful spirit of dejection lays hold of a man's soul and darkens it completely, it hinders the soul from every good work and fills it with every evil. For it does not allow the soul to perform its prayers with eagerness or to persevere in the beneficial reading of sacred texts. It makes a man irritable and frenetic towards his brothers and instills hatred for the monastic vocation itself. In short, in confounding all of the soul's salutary resolutions and impairing its vigor and perseverance, dejection renders the soul senseless and paralyzed, overwhelming it with the thought of despair.

2. Just as a moth devours a garment and a worm devours wood, so also does dejection devour a man's soul (*cf.* Proverbs 25:20), persuading it to avoid good company and allowing it neither to accept a word of advice from true friends nor to give them kind and peaceful answers. Rather, it lays hold of the entire soul and fills it with bitterness and disgust. It then suggests to the soul that it should shun other people, since they are the cause of its agitation, and does not allow it to recognize that its sickness does not come from without, but lurks within it, manifesting itself only when the temptations that assail it are brought out into the open through ascetic struggle. For a man can never be harmed by anyone else, except by way of causes that lie within himself.

3. For this reason, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Physician of souls—Who alone, as the Creator, has accurate knowledge of the soul's flaws and applies suitable remedies to these—does not urge us to forsake human company, but to eradicate the causes of evil within us and to realize that we do not attain to health of soul by separating ourselves from other human beings, but by living with virtuous men and practicing asceticism together with them.

4. Therefore, he who, for seemingly good reasons, abandons his brothers should know for sure that he does not excise the causes of dejection by his withdrawal, but merely exchanges these causes for others, since the disease that lurks within him will stir them up again in other circumstances. For this very reason, let us not blame other people for the agitations that arise from our passions, but ourselves alone; and let our entire struggle be directed against our inner passions. When these have been extirpated from us with God's help, we will easily be able to live not only with men, but even with wild beasts, as the blessed Job said: "The wild beasts shall be at peace with thee" (Job 5:23).

5. Let us, therefore, begin by fighting against the spirit of dejection that brings despair upon us, so that through hope in God we might expel it from our hearts. For it was this spirit of despair that did not allow Cain to repent after murdering his brother, or Judas after his betrayal of the Master. Let us cultivate only that kind of dejection which is engendered by repentance for our sins and coupled with "good hope" (II Thessalonians 2:16). This kind of dejection is conducive to the acquisition of heavenly goods and is deemed blessed by Christ, Who says: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (St. Matthew 5:4). The Apostle Paul also praises it when he says: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (II Corinthians 7:10).

6. This salutary dejection, which nourishes the soul with hope born of repentance, is mingled with joy; hence, it makes a man eager and obedient for every good work and affable, meek, forbearing, and patient in enduring all pain and sorrow;•••• and since it is of God, it reveals that a man is endowed with the fruits of the Spirit, that is, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, and temperance (Galatians 5:22).

7. These are the fruits of the opposite kind of dejection: listlessness, impatience, anger, hatred, contentiousness, despair, and sluggishness in prayer and psalmody. We must avoid this type of dejection as we would avoid fornication, avarice, anger, and the rest of the passions; it is healed through prayer and psalmody, hope in God, study of the Divine Scriptures, and patience amid temptations.

8. If the demon of listlessness finds a monk unprotected by these weapons, it renders him unstable, distracted, indolent, and idle. It causes him to wander around visiting many monasteries, with the sole concern of inquiring where food and drink are available. The mind of a listless monk dwells on nothing other than the distractions afforded by eating and drinking. The spirit of listlessness then shackles him with worldly affairs and gradually entices him by means of such detrimental preoccupations, until it completely banishes him from the monastic profession itself.

9. Knowing the gravity of this disease and wishing to uproot it from our souls, the Apostle indicates the causes by which it is engendered: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly

and not after the tradition which he received of us. For ye yourselves know how ye ought to follow us, for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you, neither did we eat any man's bread for naught, but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread" (II Thessalonians 3:6-12).

10. Let us hear how clearly the Apostle points out to us the causes of listlessness. For, those who do not work he calls disorderly, showing by means of a single word what a great evil this is. The disorderly man is irreverent, impulsive in speech, and quick to revile—and is therefore unsuited to silence and is a slave of listlessness. The Apostle commands us to withdraw ourselves from him, that is, to quarantine ourselves as from some contagious disease, and then says: "Not after the tradition which they received from us," showing through this phrase that such people are proud, contemptuous, and subverters of Apostolic traditions. Again, he says: "We did not eat any man's bread for naught, but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you."

11. Is this not astounding? The Teacher of the Nations, the Herald of the Gospel, he who was raised up to the Third Heaven, who says that the Lord ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel (I Corinthians 9:14), worked with labor and travail night and day, so as not to be a burden to anyone.

12. What, then, are we to do, we who are sluggish in our work and seek after bodily respite, who have been entrusted neither with the preaching of the Gospel nor with the care of the Churches (II Corinthians 11:28), but only with looking after our own souls?••••• Next, showing more clearly the harm born of laziness, Paul adds: "Working not at all, but busybodies." From laziness comes disorder and from disorder every kind of evil. Schooled in these Apostolic teachings, the Holy Fathers in Egypt do not allow the monks—and the younger ones, in particular—any opportunity for idleness, knowing that through persever-

ance in work they dispel listlessness, provide for their own sustenance, and assist those in need.

13. For they do not work only for their own needs, but from their work they provide also for guests, the poor, and prisoners, in the belief that such beneficence constitutes a holy sacrifice well-pleasing to God. And the Fathers say this: that the monk who works often wars against a single demon and is afflicted by him, whereas the lazy monk is held captive by ten thousand spirits. In addition to this, it is good to recall something which Abba Moses told me.

14. After I lived for a short time in the desert, I was bothered by listlessness. I visited Abba Moses and said: "Yesterday I was vexed by listlessness and became seriously weakened. I did not deliver myself from it until I went and visited Abba Paul." Abba Moses replied to me: "You have not delivered yourself from it; rather, you have handed yourself over as a slave to it. You should be aware that it will war against you more severely as a deserter, unless henceforth you struggle against it earnestly through patience, prayer, and manual work."

F. From St. Maximos

All of the other passions—forgetfulness and ignorance, for example—affect only the incensive, the appetitive, or the intellective faculties of the soul, whereas listlessness lays hold of all the soul's powers and arouses almost all of the passions at the same time. That is why this passion is more serious than all the others. Well, therefore, did our Lord speak when He gave us a remedy against it: "In your patience possess ye your souls" (St. Luke 21:19).

G. From the *Gerontikon*

1. While dwelling in the desert, Abba Anthony at one time fell into listlessness; his thoughts became very darkened and he said to God: "Lord, I want to be saved, but my thoughts do not leave me alone. Teach me what I should do in my affliction—how am I to be saved?"

After arising and going a short distance outside his cell, Anthony saw someone similar to himself sitting and working, and then getting up from his work and praying, and again sitting down and plaiting a rope (for such is the handiwork with which the one who appeared to

him was occupied), and again, after working for a sufficient time, standing up to pray. It was an Angel of the Lord, sent for Anthony's correction and reassurance. The Angel said to Anthony: "Do thus and you will be saved." When he heard this, Anthony was filled with great joy and confidence and cast off his listlessness. He did as the Angel instructed him, and in this way he was saved.

2. A certain brother said to Abba Anthony:† "Father, my thoughts oppress me, saying: 'You cannot fast or work. At least visit the sick, for this too is love.'" The Elder, familiar with the wiles of the demons, told him: "Go, eat, drink, sleep, and do not work; only do not depart from your cell." For the Elder knew that remaining patiently in one's cell keeps a monk on the straight and narrow. The brother returned and spent three days in his cell. However, he became listless and, finding palm-branches, split them and, on the following day, began to plait them. When he felt hungry, he said to his thoughts: "Look, there are some other small branches. I will plait them as well, and then I shall eat." When he had plaited them, he said: "I will do a little reading, and then I shall eat." After reading, he said: "I will recite a few Psalms, and then I shall eat without anxiety." In this way he gradually made progress by the Grace of God and became an experienced monk. By overcoming listlessness, he received the confidence to confront his thoughts and was victorious over them.

3. An Elder was asked by a brother: "Why do I become listless when sitting in my cell?" The Elder replied: "It is because you have not yet seen the rest for which we hope or the chastisement to come; for if you saw these clearly, even if your cell were so full of worms that you were immersed up to your neck in them, you would endure sitting in your cell without feeling listless."

4. A brother asked an Elder: "My thoughts wander and I am troubled." The Elder replied: "Sit in your cell and your thoughts will come back to you. Just as the loose foal of a tethered she-ass leaps here and there, yet—wherever it may go—always returns to its mother, so it is with the thoughts of one who remains steadfast in his cell for God's sake. Although they may wander for a short time, his thoughts will, nonetheless, return to him."

5. One of the Fathers recounted the following incident: "While I was

in Oxyrrhynchos, some poor brothers came on Saturday evening to receive alms. While we were asleep, one of them, who had only a rush mat, half of which he had placed underneath him and half on top, was frozen from the cold (for it was very cold that night). When I went out to relieve myself, I heard him suffering and trembling from the cold, yet consoling himself and saying to God such things as these: 'I thank Thee, O Lord, for all the good things that Thou doest for me; for how many men are in prison at this moment clad in irons, while others have their feet secured in stocks, unable even to relieve themselves, while I stretch out my feet like a king.' When I heard these words, I related them to my brethren for their edification and benefit."

6. One of the Fathers imposed a restriction on himself: not to go out of his cell throughout the forty days of the Great Fast, until Pascha. But the Devil, who is always jealous of those who undertake ascetic struggles, filled his whole cave with bugs from the floor to the ceiling, so that even the walls were covered with them. And his bread, the jar he used for storing water, and all of his belongings were filled with them. However, he valiantly endured this temptation and said: "I will not go out of my cell until the Holy Feast, even if I die from this ordeal." During the third week of the Fast, he looked out early in the morning and, behold, an innumerable multitude of ants entered the cave, rushed on the bugs like soldiers at war, killed them all, and carried them out of the cave. Delivered from his trial, the Elder gave thanks to God.

7. A brother asked Abba Poimen: "What am I to do? For I become fainthearted when I remain in my cell." The Elder replied to him: "Do not disparage, condemn, or speak against anyone, and God will give you rest and you will remain in your cell undisturbed."

8. A certain brother, who dwelt in the desert and in silence in his cell, was terribly beset by listlessness and was tempted to go out of his cell. He said to himself: "Why are you listless, you wretch, and why do you seek to go out of your cell? Does it not suffice for you, even though you do nothing good, not to cause scandal or distress to anyone or not to be scandalized and distressed by anyone? Bear in mind from how many evils the Lord has delivered you. You do not indulge in idle talk, or hear things that are unprofitable, or see things that are harmful. You have only one kind of warfare—namely, listlessness—and God is able to put an end to this, too, if you fall down before Him unceasingly in hu-

mility and contrition of heart and appeal for His help. He knows your weakness in all things and will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can manage (I Corinthians 10:13)." By telling himself these and suchlike things, the brother received great consolation through the Grace of God. He received this teaching from the Holy Fathers who had grown old in the desert and who had acquired great boldness before God as a result of their asceticism.

9. An Elder was asked: "Why do you never become discouraged?" He answered: "Because every day I expect to die."

10. A brother asked Abba Poimen about listlessness, and the Elder replied: "Listlessness fights against a man whenever he begins to do some good work, and there is no worse passion than this. But if a man recognizes it for what it is, he finds rest—if, that is, he summons up his patience and zeal."

H. From St. Ephraim

1. When he is attacked by some thought, a negligent and listless monk locks the door of his cell and, going out, wanders around hither and thither, like a rudderless boat; but he who remains patiently in his cell is not led astray by vain thoughts.

2. Offer a word of consolation to a negligent soul and the Lord will strengthen your heart.

3. An idle and listless monk will try out many places; but remembrance of death and future chastisements is an effective sword against the demon of listlessness.

4. For believers, faith, hope, and love are the beginning of their spiritual progress and the end of their struggle; the worst of all the vices is listlessness, especially when it has unbelief for an ally; for its fruits are filled with deadly venom.

5. Be ever mindful of the dread tribunal of God, my beloved; this remembrance will fortify you and you will be able to repulse those who devise plots against your soul.

6. He who deviates from the Lord's commandments murders his own soul; but everyone who keeps them in truth will inherit inexpressible joy.

7. Negligence is the enemy of the listless monk; haughtiness is the enemy of the patient monk; but he who truly fears the Lord overcomes both negligence and haughtiness.

8. The listless monk will miss many opportunities; but the vigilant monk will not waste even one hour.

I. From St. Isaac

1. A small cloud is able to cover the disk of the sun; but after the cloud has moved on, the sun shines with exceeding warmth. So also, a little listlessness may cover the soul, so that it does not perceive the Divine light; yet the joy that follows this episode is great.

2. When patience is multiplied in our souls, it is a sign that we have secretly received the Grace of Divine consolation. The power of patience is more powerful than the joyful thoughts that descend into the heart.

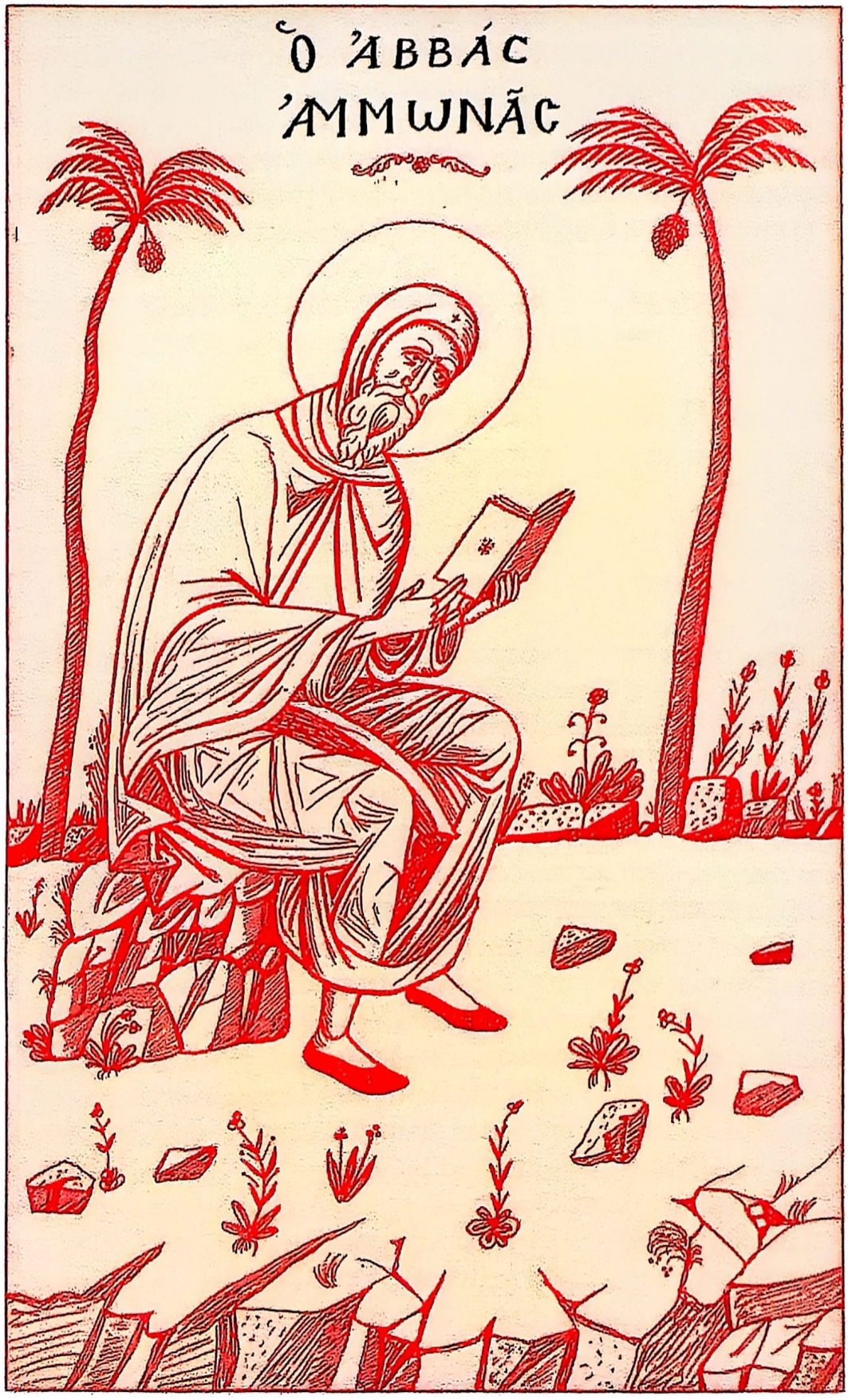
J. From the *Gerontikon*

On one occasion, Abba Ammonas came to a river, in order to cross it, and found that the ferryboat was not sailing, but was being serviced; and so, he sat down beside the river. In the meantime, another boat arrived in that place, in order to transport some people who were waiting to cross the river. They said to the Elder: "We are going to cross. Come and make the crossing with us." But he replied to them: "I will embark only on the public ferry." He had with him a bundle of palm-leaves, so he sat there plaiting a rope and then undoing it, until the ferry was ready. And in this way he crossed the river.

The brothers, therefore, made a prostration before him, saying: "Why did you do this?" The Elder responded: "So that I might not always walk when my mind urges me to do so." This is an example of how we should walk the way of God in tranquillity.

* A disposition of the soul which condemns a man to spiritual inactivity—*Trans.*

** By "*ἄφρων*," in this case we should understand one who has many worldly cares and is not "rich toward God" (St. Luke 12:21). The rich fool in the Gospel (St. Luke 12:20)



Abba Ammonas

experienced sorrow, since he did not have any place in which to gather the unprecedented harvest of his fields.

*** The following passage from the Life of St. Synkletike, which is omitted from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*, illustrates very clearly the difficulties to which the Saint refers: "Women in the world, for the most part, face great adversity; for they give birth with difficulty and at risk to themselves, they experience misery in breastfeeding, and when their children are ill, they suffer with them; and they endure these afflictions with no end to their travail. For it can happen that their offspring are either physically handicapped or, because they have been given a bad upbringing, murder their parents. Knowing this, then, let us not be enticed by the Enemy in thinking that life in the world is comfortable and carefree. There are women who, in giving birth, perish from labor pains; and, if they do not have children, they waste away from the opprobrium of being barren and infertile. I am telling you these things so that you may safeguard yourselves against the Enemy" (*Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXVIII, col. 1512CD)—*Editors.*

**** Reading *"ἔλενσιν"* rather than *"ἄλνσιν"* (see *Ὁσίου Ἐφραὶμ τοῦ Σύρου Ἔργα*, ed. Konstantinos G. Frantzolas [Thessaloniki: "To Perivoli tes Panagias" Publications, 1989], Vol. II, p. 107)—*Trans.*

***** This subsection of Section A and subsections 8-19, though unidentified in the Greek text from which we are working, are taken from various works by St. Ephraim the Syrian—*Editors.*

• For example, Jacob became an indentured servant (though not a slave) to his uncle Laban, in order to gain the hand of Laban's daughter, Rachel (Genesis 29:15-30).

•• The phrase "and given us increase, and Who nourishes us and protects us" has been omitted from the printed text of *The Evergetinos* (see *Ὁσίου Ἐφραὶμ τοῦ Σύρου Ἔργα*, Vol. II, p. 196)—*Trans.*

••• Books in the ancient world had neither the form nor the shape of modern books. They were made of parchment or papyrus and rolled up in a cylinder, in the way that paper is rolled in a scroll. [It should also be noted, as St. Nikodemos has also said elsewhere in his annotations of the text of *The Evergetinos*, that books in the ancient world were exceedingly expensive and thus a rare possession. This fact emphasizes the nonchalant attitude of the monk portrayed in this anecdote—*Trans.*]

•••• At this point, the Latin original of St. John Cassian's *Cœnobitic Institutes*, on which the Greek epitome used by Father Paul Evergetinos is based, reads "dolorem corporis et spiritus contritionem" ("bodily pain and spiritual sorrow") (*Patrologia Latina*, Vol. XLIX, col. 359A). The Greek translation contained in the *Φιλοκαλία* renders this phrase—not entirely satisfactorily—as "πόνον ἀγαθὸν καὶ συντριβὴν," and the words *"καὶ συντριβὴν"* are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*. The translator here has simply used the words "pain and sorrow"—*Editors.*

In general, readings from Latin sources in *The Evergetinos* present some difficulty, since they are taken from works that, in many instances, exist today in excellent critical editions that were not available when it was compiled a thousand years ago. Nor did St. Nikodemos and St. Makarios have extensive resources available to them in redacting the original manuscript for publication. Access to Western European scholarly materials was significantly curtailed by the political realities that prevailed in the Balkans during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when they flourished. In any event, in keeping with our goal of producing a translation of *The Evergetinos* faithful to the modern Greek text, we have avoided any major emendations in the Greek translations of Latin texts contained in the work. The texts have translated as they appear in

Greek, with very minor changes—*Editors.*

••••• The clause "but only with looking after our own souls" is missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos* (see *Φιλοκαλία* [Athens: Aster, 1974], Vol. I, p. 77)—*Editors.*

† In the *Apophthegmata Patrum,* this narrative is ascribed to St. Arsenios. However, only the first half corresponds to Abba Arsenios §11; the entire story is found in the *Verba Seniorum* (Book VII, §27; *Patrologia Latina,* Vol. LXXIII, col. 900BC). See Wilhelm Bousset, *Apophthegmata: Studien zur Geschichte des ältesten Mönchtums* (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1969), p. 178—*Editors.*

Hypothesis XIV

That the ascetic struggler, even when he is physically ill, should have no desire whatsoever for pleasures or relax his discipline, or place any hope of a cure in medical treatment, but in God, by Whose dispensation illnesses also come to us.

A. From the Life of St. Pachomios

1. The great Abba Palamon, the teacher of St. Pachomios, by then an old man and suffering from his spleen as a result of extreme asceticism, was ill throughout his body; sometimes he would eat, but drink no water, while at other times he would drink, but eat nothing at all.

2. Several brethren who once went to visit him implored him not to exhaust his body so much, but to look after it, lest by being subjected to undue strain it cause him further pain. The Elder was, with some difficulty, persuaded to partake for a few days of the food appropriate to such a disease.

3. Realizing that the pain persisted all the more, in spite of this, he abandoned his special diet, saying: "If the Martyrs of Christ, who had their limbs cut off, were beheaded, were burnt, and persevered unto death through their faith in God, why should I harm my soul by displaying laziness in the face of such a minor pain, or cowardice out of fear of what is only a temporary affliction? Although I was persuaded to partake of those foods that are thought to give relief to the body, I received no help from them. I will, therefore, resume my previous ascesis, which, I, for my part, am convinced affords every relief and by which I shall be healed. I am not pursuing this way of life according to human criteria; I am, rather, struggling for God's sake."

4. Adhering valiantly to his regimen, Palamon fell ill, after a month, with a disease which the Lord visited upon him, and in the presence of Pachomios, having prepared himself in a fitting manner, he reposed in deep old age.

St. Palamon

5. On one occasion, the brothers journeyed with Pachomios the Great to a certain island to gather rushes. While Theodore was preparing a meal for them, Pachomios returned from the harvest in the grip of some illness. Since he was shivering, Theodore threw a horsehair blanket over him. But Pachomios, upset at what Theodore had done, said: "Take this off me and throw over me the kind of rush mat that the brothers normally use."

6. No sooner had this happened than Theodore, as if he had forgotten the Elder's exacting standards, took a handful of dates, proffered them to him, and begged him to eat them. But when he saw the dates, Pachomios said tearfully to Theodore: "Can it be, Brother, that, because we have authority over the labors of the brethren and provide for their needs, we should for this reason simply give ourselves over to indifference and do something either in excess of what we need, or at the wrong time, or contrary to custom? Where is your fear of God? Tell me, Brother, did you go around all the huts of the hermits and make sure that there are no ailing Fathers in them? Do not deceive yourself, Theodore, for it is all the same, whether you transgress in a great matter or in a small matter. Therefore, if those ailing Fathers gladly endure afflictions for God, shall we not bear them, too?"

7. According to the Grace bestowed on him, Pachomios was able to evaluate the nature of various diseases, for he knew clearly that the demons use every conceivable scheme in their efforts to impede the faithful. Once, while he was at the monastery, he was stricken with a very severe fever and went without food for five days. Realizing that this was a trick of the Evil One, who always wants to hinder the Saints, he did not cease from waking up at the beginning of each day and making fervent supplications to God, Whom he loved so much. After a short time he gained relief from the disease and sat down at table with the brethren who were healthy, giving thanks to the Lord, Who had granted him such discernment. Endowed as he was with this spiritual gift, he did not in any way neglect the ailing, but was kind and sympathetic to the brothers in a way that no one else was.

8. At another time, Theodore was suffering from a headache that caused him acute pain. When he asked for medical treatment, Pachomios said: "Do you indeed suppose, Brother, that this disease or any other like it happens without God's permission? Wherefore, endure, my

child, and the Lord will heal you whenever He so wills. As long as He is testing you, be sure to show gratitude, like Job who was perfect, so that you might enjoy some respite. Godly patience in prayer and abstinence is good for an ascetic; but, when he is ill, he can receive a greater reward through endurance and forbearance."

9. There was another brother in the same monastery by the name of Zacchaios,* who, after a long time spent in asceticism, contracted leprosy. He had a cell separate from those of the other brethren, and continued to fulfill all of his ascetic duties, partaking only of salt and bread and working on making rush mats every day, just like those who were healthy. He endured so much torment that he was often pricked in his hands, in the process of plaiting the ropes used for rush mats, drawing drops of blood and, thus, demonstrating his perseverance by the very work that he did.

10. Although he was so ill, he was never absent from the common worship of the brotherhood, and he never slept during the day until his departure from this life. At night, before he lay down to sleep, he was in the habit of learning portions of Holy Scripture by heart, fulfilling his cell rule, making the sign of the Cross over his entire body, and then, after giving thanks to God, lying down. He would wake up at midnight and chant hymns until the morning.

11. Once, one of the brothers, seeing Zacchaios's hands dreadfully wounded and bloodstained on account of the coarseness of his work, said to him: "Brother, why do you wear yourself out by working like this, especially when you are racked by such a disease? Would it be a sin for you to take a rest from work? Will God judge you for not working? He sees that you suffer, and no one with such an affliction as yours has ever engaged in manual work; moreover, no one is forcing you to carry out such work. By God's mercy we have enough for others, both our guests and the poor; shall we not eagerly serve you, who are one of us and a Father so advanced in years?" When he replied that it was impossible for him not to work, the brother said: "If this is how you feel about it, then work; but at least anoint your hands with olive oil every evening, so that they will not bleed and you will not suffer."

12. Persuaded by these words, Zacchaios did as he was instructed; yet, he suffered even more injuries from being pricked by the rushes, to

the point that he could no longer endure the pain they caused him. When St. Pachomios went to visit him in his cell, he reported to him the treatment that he was administering to his hands. Pachomios said to him: "Do you suppose, Brother, that the oil is helping you? Who compelled you to work so hard that, using the pretext of your work, you place your hope for healing more on perceptible oil than on God? Surely it is not impossible for God to heal you. Or do you not know that we need to be mindful of our infirmities? Or is He Whose nature it is to love mankind so indifferent to our sufferings that He hates us? No, providing for the benefit of our souls, He allows afflictions to befall us, so that, by enduring them bravely, we might display our endurance.** Let us ascribe everything to Him, that He might grant us relief from pains when and as He wills." Zacchaios replied: "Forgive me, Father, and pray for me, that God the Master may blot out this sin and all of my other sins."

13. Some of the brothers found out that Zacchaios mourned for a whole year because of this sin, eating only every two days.

B. From the Life of St. Synkletike

1. The Blessed Synkletike said: "If you have resolved to fast, do not plead illness as an excuse or give up fasting on account of it; for even those who do not fast often fall into the same or more grievous diseases. If you have begun something good, do not desist from it just because the Enemy thwarts you through illness; let him, rather, be foiled through your patient endurance.

2. "People about to go on a voyage first unfurl the ship's sails to catch a favorable wind; later on they may encounter a contrary wind, yet the sailors do not immediately throw the ship's cargo overboard because of a small gale. They rest for a short while or contend against the turbulence of the waves; after this has passed, they resume their voyage unharmed.

3. "In the same way, when an adverse spirit assails us, let us, for our part, stretch out the Cross as our sail and accomplish our ascetic voyage without fear."

C. From the Life of St. Luke of Hellas

1. On one occasion, when the Saint was on an island in the vicinity of Kalamion, taking refuge from a Turkish onslaught, our enemy, the Devil, devised an oppressive and irritating disease for him: he caused his reproductive organs to itch so severely and violently that he was almost ready to cut them off. Now, to what remedy did he have recourse in order to deal with this evil? Continuous prayer both to God and to the Saint whose body was buried in that place.*** Appearing to Luke in a dream, the latter showed him an herb and said: "Through this herb you will find healing for your affliction, but know that you will hereby lose the due reward for your patience."

2. On awakening from this dream, Luke showed himself to be no mean judge, when it came to choosing what was beneficial for him. He did not put relief from something which caused him temporary irritation before his eternal reward, but chose to suffer in this way until the Lord, the "God of knowledge" (I Kings 2:3), Who evaluates the worth of an action by a man's intention alone, healed his disease as He knew best, thus storing up perfect recompense in the future life for this spiritual athlete.

D. From St. Maximos

Of the virtues, some pertain to the body and others to the soul. Examples of bodily virtues are fasting, vigil, serving other people, sleeping on the ground, doing manual work—so as not to be a burden on anyone or in order to give alms—and the like (*cf.* I Thessalonians 2:9; Ephesians 4:28). Examples of virtues of the soul are love, long-suffering, gentleness, temperance, prayer, and the like (*cf.* Galatians 5:22).**** If, therefore, as a result of some necessity or bodily condition, such as illness or something of that kind, it happens that we are unable to practice the aforementioned bodily virtues, we have forgiveness from the Lord, Who knows the reasons for our actions. But if we fail to practice the virtues of the soul, we shall have no excuse, for these are not subject to constraint.*****

E. From the *Gerontikon*

1. It was said of Abba Ammoes that he lay ill in bed for many years and that he never allowed his mind to dwell on the inside of his cell or to take any notice of its contents; for, since he was ill, the other Fathers

would bring him various things to eat. When his disciple went in and out of the cell bringing food, the Elder would close his eyes, so as not to see what the brother was carrying. So great was the exactitude displayed by the Elder that, even when ill, he refrained from delighting his palate or asking for anything that he enjoyed. He was content and pleased with what his disciple prepared and brought him. This is an example that we should strive to emulate to the best of our ability.

2. Abba Isaac once fell seriously ill, and the illness remained with him for a long period of time. A certain brother who served him made him a little porridge, put some small plums into it, and offered it to the Elder. When he saw the porridge, the Elder did not want it. The brother, therefore, pleaded with him, saying: "Take a little, Abba." The Elder replied: "In all truth, Brother, I should like to spend thirty years in this condition."

3. Abba Longinos took ill only once, saying to himself: "Be ill and even die. If you ask me to eat outside the appointed times, I will not provide you even with the daily sustenance permitted by monastic custom."

F. From St. Ephraim

1. The Lord says in the Gospel that one who is not faithful over a few things is not faithful over many either.• By "a few things" the Lord means such worldly concerns as food, clothing, and bodily needs, concerning which He bade us not to be anxious, but to let Him take care of them.•• By "many things" He means the bounties of the age to come, which He promised to provide for those who believe in Him and who are unremitting in their eagerness to obtain them and forever ask for them: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matthew 6:33).

2. Hence, these few temporal concerns become a proof and a test of each man's faith in Christ. For he who believes that as long as we are not at all anxious about temporal things, but care only about the things of the future life, God will provide them in abundance, as He has promised—such a man clearly has faith in eternal realities and genuinely seeks after these. This is evident from the following considerations.

3. Do you believe that it is possible for you to become a son of God and a joint-heir of Christ and reign with Him through all the ages?••• "Yes," you will assuredly say; "for this is why I renounced the world and what is in the world and chose to serve the Lord." Then examine yourself closely, in case you have become occupied once again by earthly cares and concern over bodily needs, about which you were commanded not to be anxious. Should this turn out to be the case, you spoke falsely when you said that you believed in the future life.

4. For if you believed without hesitation that you would receive these great and imperishable good things of the future life, you would not have disbelieved the Lord with regard to these small and perishable things. He has promised to provide you unfailingly with those things which, in His goodness, He gives to beasts and birds and impious men. If, therefore, you have no faith in Him when it comes to these paltry earthly things, how can you say that you believe in heavenly and eternal things?

5. Let me ask you a further question: Do you believe that it is possible for Christ to heal your soul of its wounds and passions? You will undoubtedly say: "I do believe this, for I stand on this hope." Consider whether you are not deceiving yourself in this case, too, since you summon physicians to attend to your bodily diseases, thereby accusing Christ of responsibility for your infirmity, because, supposedly, He cannot heal you, although you have entrusted yourself to Him.

6. For, it is clear that, just as the body is worth more than clothing, as the Lord says,•••• so also the soul is worth more than the body; and if you believe that the wounds of the soul, which men are incapable of healing, can be healed by Christ, how much more should you believe that Christ can heal bodily wounds, calling on Him alone, disregarding the medical profession.

7. But no doubt you will say: "God, Who Himself makes herbs spring up for the healing of the body, has not impeded us from having recourse to physicians." I agree with you. But you should realize those for whom medical care is appropriate. For since mankind fell from the delight of Paradise through transgressing God's commandment and was sent into this world as an exile, and since his flesh fell prey to suffering and disease, in His great goodness God granted these herbal

remedies to people living in the world, who are unable to entrust themselves wholeheartedly to God. But as for you, who desire to be perfect and a stranger to this world and to become a son of God and to rise higher than the first man (free from passions though he was), inasmuch as you have received greater promises, it behooves you to have a way of life, a way of thinking, and a faith that are altogether new and set you apart from all those who live in the world.

8. Furthermore, if you had not had such an intention as you do, what was there to prevent you from getting married, acquiring wealth, engaging in trade, and enjoying the other good things of this world? In His Œconomy, God provided these things, too, for human beings, who, as we said, had already become subject to sin. But you have distanced yourself from all of them in order to be united with God. Therefore, it is proper for you to eschew medical treatment just as you eschew those worldly pursuits; for you have wholly entrusted yourself to Christ, Who promised to provide His servants with all that they need.

[As in all such Patristic advice, one must distinguish—as St. Ephraim so clearly does in the foregoing subsections (7 and 8)—between the greater degree of faith and ascetic rigor appointed for those in the monastic life and for non-monastics. As well, the standard of the desert Elders was uncompromising and of the highest degree. Except in the rarest of instances, it also does not apply *even to monastics* in our days, as evidenced by several aphorisms and anecdotes contained in *The Evergetinos* itself. The Elders predicted a continuous diminution of monastic exactitude and ascetic strictness over the years and allowed for the application of a far lower standard for monks and nuns—if not Christians *in general*—in the future, affirming that some, in our time, would be saved simply by a modicum of ascetic labor, basic moral comportment, and a mere fidelity to the Orthodox Faith. This does not, of course, mean that one should not act in accord with the *spirit* of the high standard set by the monastics of the Egyptian desert. *Cf.* Hypothesis XV, Section B, subsection 1, and the attached editorial note, as well as Section C, subsection 2, above—*Editors.*]

9. Hence, he who wishes to be a true Christian man and who has come to believe, through hearing, in realities that surpass our understanding—to wit, the inheritance of the Heavenly City, the delight of the eternal Kingdom, sanctification of the heart, and complete purification through the Holy Spirit—ought to entrust all bodily cares to God.

Moreover, he should regard poverty as riches, hardship as respite, reproach as honor, and insult as glory. This is the hallmark of genuine servants of Christ, who truly have faith in His words.

* In other versions of this story, he is called Athenodoros (which may have been his secular name).

** "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (St. James 1:2-3).

*** The words "that he was almost ready...in that place" are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos* (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXI, cols. 461D-464A)—*Trans.*

**** The clause "Examples of virtues of the soul are love, long-suffering, gentleness, temperance, prayer, and the like" is missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos* (see *Φιλοκαλία* [Athens: Aster, 1975], Vol. II, pp. 21-22)—*Trans.*

***** That is, they are within our power—*Trans.*

• "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (St. Matthew 25:21).

•• "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matthew 6:31-33).

••• "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:17).

•••• "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (St. Matthew 6:25).

Hypothesis XV

How and when we should seek medical treatment and what kind of treatment; that the monk should not leave his monastery for bodily healing, but should persevere there even if he is ill, being content with the care provided by his brothers.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. It is related about the Bishop of Oxyrrhynchos, Apphy by name, that when he was in the desert, he observed a very austere way of life. When he became Bishop, he wanted to practice the same austerity in the world, but lacked the strength to do so. He prostrated himself before God, saying: "Has Grace perhaps departed from me because of my episcopal office?" The following answer was revealed to him: "Grace has not left you. Back then you were in the desert and God looked after you, since there were no human beings nearby; now, however, you are in the world, and there are people to take care of you."

2. There was an Elder living in Sketis who became seriously ill and who was looked after by his brothers. When he saw that the brothers were growing weary on his account, he said: "I will go to Alexandria,* so as not to exhaust my brothers." But Abba Moses told him: "Do not go to Alexandria, for if you do, you will fall to fornication." Upset at this advice, the Elder replied: "My body is dead, and you tell me this?"

3. And so, the Elder departed for Alexandria. When the people heard of his arrival, they brought him many gifts. Among them was a certain virgin, who came forward in good faith to serve the Elder, and the two became acquainted with each other. But when, after some time, the Elder recovered, he sinned with her and she became pregnant.

4. Seeing her in this state, people asked how she had conceived. "It was that Elder," she replied. They did not believe her; but the Elder said to them: "It was I. But please take care of the child after it is born."

5. And so, after the child had been born and weaned, the Elder came

and took it and went back with it to Sketis. After waiting for a Feast Day to fall, he went to the Church and entered in view of all the people, carrying the child on his shoulders.

6. When they saw this, the brothers wept; but the Elder said to them: "Do you see this child? He is the son of disobedience. Thus, guard yourselves, brothers, for I committed this sin in my old age. And pray for me." He then departed to his cell and resumed his previous way of life.

7. A certain brother, bitten by a snake, went to the city for medical treatment. A devout and God-fearing woman took him in her house and healed him. But when the monk felt some slight relief from his pain, the Devil began to sow shameful thoughts in him towards the woman; and so, when she came in, as usual, to look after him, the brother touched her hand.

8. Realizing that the Devil was waging war against the brother, she said to him: "No, Father. Take care. You have Christ—you have put on Christ—you wear the Angelic *schema*. Think of the sorrow and remorse that you will experience later on, when you are sitting in your cell. Call to mind the sighs, the tears that you will shed in abundance, and the hardships that you will suffer because of some brief and putrid pleasure."

9. On hearing the words of that prudent woman, the monk was ashamed; unable even to look her in the face, he wanted to run away. But with the tender mercy of Christ, she restrained him and said to him: "Do not change your mind and leave. You are not yet completely cured. Stay a little longer, for you need further treatment. Those evil thoughts did not come from your pure soul, but were suggestions of the envious Devil." Having thus persuaded him to remain a little longer, when she had healed him, she gave him provisions for the journey and let him depart in peace.

Commentary by Father Paul Evergetinos

Do you see how this brother, on account of his lack of hope in God and his faintheartedness, went without fear into the city to be cured of a physical ailment? Do you see how he was abandoned by Divine Grace and overwhelmed by the Enemy? He would certainly have fallen into the sin of fornication if this amazing woman had complied; but it was she who upheld him and prevented him from falling completely. Let us fear such a fall as this and keep watch over ourselves.

B. From St. Diadochos

1. There is nothing to prevent us from calling doctors when we fall ill. Since the science of medicine was destined to be discovered at some time through human experimentation, natural remedies were already in existence for this purpose. However, we should not place our hope of healing in doctors but in our true Savior and Physician, Jesus Christ.

[It should be made clear that St. Diadochos is not saying that, while we are free to consult physicians, they are not actually an effective source of healing. His point is that we must see all things in the world, including the science of medicine and those who practice it, as *effective by the Grace of Christ*, in Whom we must ultimately place our hope and Who is the source of all healing, through whatever agent, be it the human physician or the medicinal remedies which he dispenses—*Editors.*]

2. I say this to those living in *cœnobia* or practicing self-control in cities, because by reason of the conditions in which they live they cannot uninterruptedly maintain an active life of faith through love. Moreover, I say this so that they might not fall into vainglory or diabolical temptation, whereby some proclaim that they have not needed doctors for many years.

3. But if one is living the anchoritic life in more remote regions, with two or three like-minded brethren, whatever illnesses he may fall into, let him approach with faith the Lord alone, Who heals "all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (St. Matthew 4:23); for after the Lord, he has the desert as sufficient consolation in sickness.

4. Hence, such a monk never lacks the opportunity to exercise faith; indeed, he finds no outlet to make a [sinful—*Trans.*] display of the virtue that derives from his patience, since he has the desert for a veil to shield him from vainglory. For this reason, the Lord "settleth solitaries in an house" (Psalm 67:7).

C. From St. Barsanouphios

1. A brother asked an Elder: "Since you have judged me fit to serve in the infirmary, tell me, Father, whether I ought to read medical books and achieve proficiency in this area by myself. Or is it better for me not

to worry about such things and to avoid them on the grounds that they distract my mind, lest they engender vainglory in me without my realizing it? Should I be content with the practical knowledge that I possess, doing whatever I can with ointments, poultices, and embrocations, and, in general, employing such techniques as those who do not read medical books endeavor to use?"

2. The Elder replied: "Since we have not yet attained to perfection, so as to be completely freed from the captivity of the passions, it is more advantageous for us to meditate on medical matters than on the bodily energies. However, we should not place our hope in medicine, but in God, Who puts to death and gives life and says: 'I will smite and I will heal' (Deuteronomy 32:39). Therefore, if you consult medical books or ask anyone about medical matters, do not forget that without God no one is healed. He who applies himself to the art of medicine should do so in God's Name, and God will help him. The science of medicine does not prevent anyone from being pious; but look upon it as the brothers look upon their manual work. Do what you do with fear of God, and you will maintain the integrity of your calling."

3. The brother said: "Father, you have told me on other occasions that one cuts off his own will by never striving to impose his own will or his own ideas on others. What if I offer a sick person something beneficial and it actually harms him? In such instances, I feel distressed at having done my own will. I also notice that I am distracted all day long and scarcely have any opportunity so much as to remember God. Tell me, then, what am I to do? For I believe that my salvation resides in my work."

4. The Elder replied: "If you insist on thinking that this remedy is beneficial for the sick person and it turns out that he is harmed by it, God, Who regards the heart, will not condemn you; for He knows that, although you harmed this person, you wanted to help him. But if someone who is experienced tells you what to do, and you disdain to listen to him and do what you think best, this is arrogance and self-will.

5. "With respect to distraction, listen to what I have to say. Many people hear all the time about such and such a city, and it happens that they enter it, not knowing that this is the city in question. Brother, you are in remembrance of God the whole day long, and you are not aware of it? For to have a commandment and to strive to devote yourself to fulfill-

ing it constitutes both submission to your superiors and remembrance of God.

6. "Brother John [St. Barsanouphios' famed fellow ascetic—*Trans.*] put it well when he said: 'First throw out the leaves, that is, the workings of the passions, and by God's command you will throw out also the fruits, that is, the passions themselves.' Therefore, if you do not know what is profitable for you, follow those who do know. This is humility, and in it you will find the Grace of God.** You were right in saying that your salvation resides in your work. For, it was not without God's Will that you came here; rather, God guided you here.

7. "'Be strong in the Lord' (Ephesians 6:10), for you reap no small benefit from the distraction of which you speak."

D. From St. Ephraim

1. Do not neglect one who is ill, for it is written: "He who stoppeth his ears from hearing the infirm shall himself also cry, and there shall be none to hear him" (Proverbs 21:13).

2. If your brother is suffering, suffer with him, so that you might be counted worthy to hear from the Lord on the Day of Judgment: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (St. Matthew 25:40).

3. He who neglects the infirm angers God, Who punishes him, and he who rejoices in the fall of his brother will himself experience a terrible fall.

4. My beloved, if you have expertise in the science of medicine and are able to cure people, be vigilant, lest in your desire to heal others you show yourself to be full of passions. As the Apostle says: "Let not your good be evil spoken of" (Romans 14:16).

* In the older Greek text, the Elder says that he is going to Egypt, even though Sketis was in Egypt. Though it is logical that he would have sought medical treatment in a large city like Alexandria, for the desert Fathers, "Egypt" was a way of referring to the secular world, which is, of course, the point of this anecdote. The older Greek text retains this contrast between Sketis and Egypt—*Editors.*

** "God resisteth the proud, but giveth Grace unto the humble" (Proverbs 3:34; St. James 4:6).

Hypothesis XVI

That a monk should not bathe or strip completely naked unless compelled by necessity.

A. From the Life of St. Anthony

1. St. Anthony practiced a severe and very intense form of asceticism. He fasted constantly, and for his clothing he had an inner garment made of hair and an outer garment made of hide, and these he kept until his death. But he did not suffer either to bathe his body in water when it was dirty, or to wash his feet at all, or even so much as to put them into water unless compelled by necessity. Indeed, from the time Anthony became a monk, no one even saw him unclothed or his body naked at all, throughout his life.

2. On one occasion, while sitting on the mountain,* he looked up and saw someone being borne upwards in the air, to the great rejoicing of the Angels who met him. Marveling at the sight and deeming such a company blessed, and desiring to learn who this might be, he heard a voice saying that it was the soul of Ammoun, a monk in Nitria, who had persevered in asceticism until old age.

3. It is said that many miracles were wrought through Ammoun, and this is one of them. He once had to cross a river called the Lykos, but since this was the season when the river flooded he asked Theodore, who was with him, to go some distance away from him, lest they see each other naked as they swam through the water. However, although Theodore had departed, he again felt ashamed even to see himself naked; while he was experiencing these feelings of shame and pondering what to do, he was suddenly caught up and carried across to the opposite side.

B. From the Narrative About the Holy Fathers Slain at Sinai and Rhaïthou

1. After the barbarians had killed many of the Saints, while passing

St. Ammoun

through the desert they saw a verdant oasis luxuriant with trees, to which they immediately ran as fast as they could.

2. When they reached the oasis, they came across a small dwelling, in which a young lad lived in asceticism. His magnanimity and courage were admired even by these barbarians. He refused either to point out to them certain monasteries which had escaped their notice, and thereby escape death (for the barbarians had promised not to kill him if he gave them this information), or to depart from his cell. Nor did he consent to take off his tunic (the sole garment covering his nakedness). He told the barbarians: "It would be an act of betrayal for me to inform on those who are able to escape, and if I were to submit to any compulsion whatsoever I would be cowardly and pusillanimous. Those who practice asceticism should be characterized by magnanimity, and it is not right to give way to fear or threats, even if they seem to pose great danger; for if we get into the habit of yielding to such, we are on the way that leads to greater falls; and cowardice, once it has learned to control us, orders us to despise great virtues and subsequently to betray even the true Faith itself, when the fear of horrors to come finds a man's will already beset by cowardice.

3. "If I now find it easy to relinquish my freedom of will," he went on, "fearing lest I shall soon die, will I not the more easily desert to the side of impiety when threatened by ill-treatment and tortures, having accustomed myself to preferring freedom from pain to what is beneficial for me?

4. "So, now that you have failed to obtain what you were hoping for, do not shrink from doing what you wish. I will neither indicate the places in which the ascetics dear to God dwell—although I know where they are—nor come out of my cell, even if you order me to do so. Nor, as long as I am still conscious and in control of myself, will I remove my garment, lest someone see me naked and behold my body, which I have hitherto not seen with my own eyes. After I am dead and insensate, let each man do with me whatsoever he wishes; for in that case the blame will rest with the perpetrators, on account of their savagery, and not with the sufferer, who, being dead, has no free will.

5. "Therefore, I shall die inside my cell clothed, as I have resolved, and I shall not do anything contrary to my better judgment or hand my-

self over as a slave. I shall be slain in the arena in which I have contested, and this cell will become my grave. Having previously received the sweat that I shed in my struggle for virtue, it will now receive the blood that I am going to shed in martyrdom."

6. Unable to tolerate the young monk's candor, and enraged by the nobility of his mind, the scoundrels thrashed him with as many blows as his body could sustain. For each of the barbarians, wishing to unleash his own anger against him, reckoned that the stabs already inflicted would not constitute adequate vengeance, unless he plunged his own sword into the lad's body with his own hand, thereby assuaging his anger.

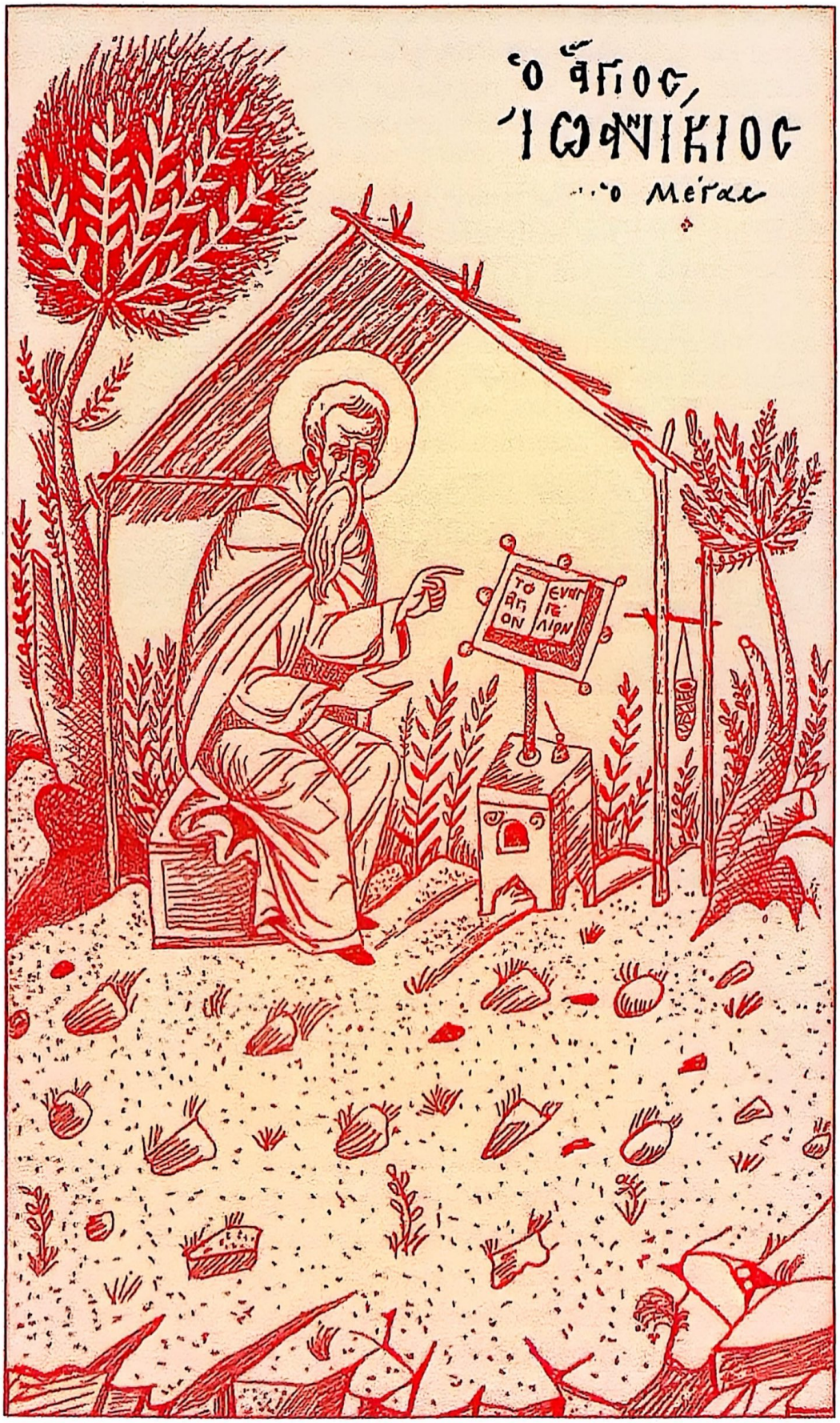
7. The majority of them withdrew after wounding the courageous youth—either when he was already dead or while he was still alive—convulsed with rage because that feeble body of his did not suffice for them to visit greater punishments on it.

C. From the Life of St. Ioannikios the Great

1. Evstratios, the Abbot of the Monastery of Agavron, together with several other monks, once visited the wondrous Ioannikios, and they spent their time in conversation about spiritual matters. A certain ascetic by the name of Elias, a neighbor of St. Ioannikios, offered hospitality both to the great Saint and to Evstratios and his party.

2. In the meantime, the great Saint, denouncing the vanity of life and showing by his words both its instability and its unreliability, exhorted his listeners, in general, to keep away from cities and villages; but he told Elias that it behooved him to do so more than the rest. "Have no fear for me in this regard, Father Ioannikios," he said, citing, by way of further assurance, the many years that he had previously spent as a hermit and his avoidance of contact with worldly people.

3. Two days after the Saint had spoken these words, that same monk, Elias, came to him and asked for a blessing to go to a spa on account of a disease that had befallen him. He refused to give Elias such a blessing; however, the latter insisted on going, and eventually, condescending to this brother's weakness, the Saint sent him on his way.



St. Ioannikios the Great

4. However, on arriving, Elias could scarcely bear even to approach the surface of the hot springs, and fainted. Some people who happened to be there lifted him up and put him to bed in one of the monastic cells near the mountain. Around the middle of the night, he departed from this cell for the desert, so thankful for his previous ascetic labors, the remembrance of which, keeping him from abandoning the desert for the care of his body, brought about—oh, the wonder!—his bodily cure.**

D. From St. Ephraim

An ascetic monk should not wash his body or his feet in a sensual manner, as do hedonistic worldly people. For just as the latter hunt after pleasures through bodily adornment and fine clothing, so also the struggler for piety resists the pleasures that militate against his way of life by means of their opposites; that is, by disregard for the body and its outward adornment.

E. From St. Isaiah

1. If you are visiting a brother and grow weary while *en route*, and you wish to anoint yourself with a little oil on account of the labor of the journey, anoint only your feet, uncovering them with modesty. However, do not allow your body to be anointed with oil, except out of necessity or in the case of illness.

2. If, while you are sitting in your cell, a brother from another place comes to visit you, do likewise to him; that is, anoint his feet and say to him: "Do me a favor and take a little oil and anoint yourself with it," so that he can anoint his body in private.

3. If he is reluctant to accept the oil, do not badger him; but if he is an experienced Elder, insist that he anoint his entire body, as a relief from his labors.

F. From St. Diadochos

No one would assert that going to the baths is sinful or unreasonable; but to refrain from this for the sake of abstinence I call both manly and most prudent. For if we avoid bathing, neither does that pleasurable moisture enervate our body nor are we reminded of Adam's inglo-

rious nakedness, so that we have to provide ourselves with leaves, as he did, to cover our shame a second time. Indeed, since we have just recently escaped from the corruption of the world, we ought to cleave through bodily chastity to the beauty of self-control.

G. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Palladios related the following story to us: "I once went to Alexandria with Abba Daniel for some need. There, we encountered a young monk coming out of the public baths, where he had bathed. Elder Daniel groaned and said to me: 'Do you see this brother? The Name of God will be blasphemed because of him. But let us follow him, so that we might see where he is staying.'

2. "So we followed him and entered his lodgings, behind him. The Elder took him aside and said to him: 'Brother, it is not appropriate for you, who are young and healthy, to bathe. Be assured, my child, that in so doing you scandalize many, and not only lay people, but also monastics.' The brother replied to the Elder: 'Know that, "if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10); and Scripture also says: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged" (St. Luke 6:37).' Then the Elder made a prostration to him, saying: 'Forgive me for the Lord's sake, for as a man I have erred in reproving you.' After we had left the room, I said to the Elder: 'Maybe that brother bathes because he is ill and so is not culpable.'

3. "The Elder groaned and wept, saying: 'The truth will inform you, brother, that I saw more than fifty demons circling round him and pouring filth over him. I also saw one Ethiopian woman sitting on his shoulders and kissing him, and another in front of him, boxing him on the ears and instructing him to act shamelessly, as well as demons dancing around him and gloating over him. Yet, I did not see his Guardian Angel either near him or far away from him. I infer from this that he is replete with every kind of obscenity.

4. "'Even his clothing bears witness to what I say, for it is made of goatskin, soft, and woven with fine thread. Also, there is the very fact that he goes around so shamelessly in the middle of this city, which those who have grown old in asceticism enter only for indispensable needs and from which they hasten to depart, lest their souls suffer any

harm.

5. "'Besides, if this monk were not self-centered, hedonistic, and lecherous, he would not be nonchalantly stripping himself naked in the baths or seeing other men naked, when our Holy Fathers Anthony, Pachomios, Ammoun, Serapion, and other God-bearing Fathers have decreed that no monk should strip bare without great necessity, or unless he is seriously ill. For, when they wanted to cross rivers for particular needs and no ferry was available, unable to endure being naked because of the shame that they felt before the Holy Angels accompanying them and the sun that shed its light on them, although there was no one to see them, they nonetheless entreated God to help them. They were lifted up into the air and so crossed the rivers, because God, in His omnipotence and love for mankind, readily accepted their righteous and pious requests and miraculously fulfilled them.' After telling me these things, the Elder fell silent.

6. "After we had returned to Sketis, not many days passed when some brothers came from Alexandria and related that such and such a brother who was a Priest (for he had been ordained) and who lived at the Church of St. Isidore, having arrived a short while ago from Constantinople (this is the brother about whom the Elder had spoken), was caught in the act of adultery with the wife of the *Silentiarius*.*** The slaves and neighbors of the *Silentiarius* immediately arrested him and cut off his genitals. After being thus mutilated, he survived for three days and then died, having become a shame and disgrace to all monastics.

7. "On hearing this news, I arose and went to Abba Daniel and told him what had happened. When the Elder was informed, he wept and said: 'A proud man is chastised by a fall.' The Elder explained that if that brother had not been sick with pride and had accepted his advice, he would not have suffered such an ignominious death. Let all who are proud learn a lesson from what happened to this monk, being taught by his fall to avoid such a precipice."

H. From St. Ephraim

1. Beloved Brother, tell me, why do you wash your face with water? It must be in order to please your neighbor, and from this it is clear that you have not yet spat upon the passions of the flesh, but are still en-

slaved to these.

2. If, therefore, you wish to wash your face, wash it with tears and lave it with lamentation, that you may shine with glory before God and the Holy Angels; for, a face washed with tears is unfading beauty.

3. But perhaps you will tell me that the filthiness of your face embarrasses you. Know, however, that the filthiness of your feet and face, coupled with a pure heart, will make you shine more brightly than the sun before God and the Holy Angelic Powers.

[Once more, we should make note of the perfect standard of the desert monastics. Living in the most austere of circumstances, isolated from people in the world, and taking heed of the cleanliness of the soul, they rightfully ignored the vanity of grooming themselves for the sake of appearance. Though some washed themselves, or even used oil on their skin, this was done with care, as witnessed by the advice in Sections D and E, above. The avoidance of public baths, which in the ancient world were often places frequented by individuals of poor morals, was an obvious necessity for monastics.

The proscriptions contained in the foregoing passages from *The Evergetinos* about personal hygiene portray with clarity the rôle of modesty in the maintenance of bodily purity among monastics. Today, when monks and nuns frequently interact with lay people, they should not seem to be heedless of the common standards of cleanliness in their appearance and should thus clean their bodies or bathe in private, with the standard of the desert Fathers as a constant guide and standard—*Editors.*]

* St. Anthony's beloved "inner mountain" (see chaps. 49-51 in the Life of St. Anthony by St. Athanasios the Great)—*Trans.*

** In variant versions, the monk is said to have died, after fainting, partly obfuscating the lesson—*Trans.*

*** A dignitary who ensured state secrets in the imperial palace in Constantinople—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XVII

That there is nothing undetermined by God; all that happens, even sudden death, has been ordained by Divine Providence.

A. From St. Gregory the Dialogist

1. A certain Anastasius, a devout man, was Abbot of a monastery called Suppentonia, above which there lies an enormous cliff.

2. One night, a voice came from the top of the cliff, saying: "Anastasius, come!" The voice subsequently called eight other brothers in succession. The whole Brotherhood heard this voice, and all realized that those who had been summoned would soon die.

3. Within a short time, the righteous Anastasius was the first to die; the rest then departed to the Lord in the order in which the voice had summoned them. A remarkable incident occurred while the venerable Anastasius was dying. There was a brother in the monastery who did not want to live without him.

4. Prostrating himself at Anastasius' feet, the brother tearfully entreated him, saying: "By Him to Whom you are going, do not let me remain seven days in this world without you." Before the week was over, he, who had not been called along with the rest, also reposed. It is clear, therefore, that through the prayers of the Holy Anastasius he was translated from this life.

Peter

5. We learn from this incident that those who are perfect in the sight of the Lord can often obtain things which have not been predestined.

Gregory

6. In no way can they obtain things which have not been predestined! Whatever the Saints receive and accomplish through prayer has

already been predestined for them to obtain through prayer. Even the inheritance of the eternal Kingdom has been foreordained by Almighty God for His chosen ones, and it is His good pleasure that they receive it through much toil and supplication.

Peter

7. I should like clear proof that prayer is compatible with predestination.*

Gregory

8. You can understand this clearly, Peter, from the story of Abraham. For, as you know, God said to Abraham: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12); and again: "I have made thee a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5); and again: "Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of Heaven, and as the sand which is by the shore of the sea" (Genesis 22:17). It is evident that God willed to multiply the seed of Abraham through Isaac.

9. If, therefore, it was foreordained that the seed of Abraham should be multiplied in Isaac, why did Isaac receive a barren wife? For Scripture says that Isaac entreated the Lord concerning his wife and God granted to Rebecca that she should conceive.** From this it is clear, therefore, that predestination is fulfilled through prayer, since Isaac, in whom God had foreordained that He would multiply the seed of Abraham, begat children when his prayer was heard.

Peter

10. I have no further doubts on this subject and have received a clear solution to my difficulty.

* The point of Peter's question seems to be that predestination pertains to the omniscience of God, while prayer involves man's free will—*Trans.*

** "And Isaac made supplication to the Lord concerning Rebecca his wife, because she was barren; God hearkened to him, and his wife Rebecca conceived in her womb" (Genesis 25:21).

Hypothesis XVIII

Concerning patience amid illnesses and the benefit to be derived therefrom, and that God brings providential chastisements upon certain virtuous persons for their perfect purification.

A. From St. Gregory the Dialogist*

1. A most venerable Father by the name of Spes built various monasteries in a place called Campli [in Italy—*Trans.*]. The Almighty and merciful God chastised this Elder in the present life and delivered him from the eternal torments of Hell. Through him, He revealed the magnitude of His wondrous Œconomy towards mankind by both threats and compassion; for He showed how much He loved Spes, even while chastising him (Proverbs 3:12; Hebrews 12:6), by subsequently healing him completely.

2. The eyes of this revered Elder were incapacitated for a period of forty years with the darkness of unremitting blindness, such that he was unable to see anything at all. No one can endure this scourge of blindness unless the merciful Father, Who imposes this affliction, endows him with patience; in some cases, chastisement causes people to sin, rather than benefiting them, because they do not have patience. For precisely this reason God, knowing our weakness, tempers His blows with this patience, so that He might show Himself to be just when He chastises His elect children, and thereafter rightly shows mercy to them.

3. Such was the case with this most pious man. Although God shrouded him with the outer darkness of blindness, He never left him destitute of inner light. Thus, as much as he suffered from this bodily scourge, so much did the protection of the All-Holy Spirit fill his heart with consolation. After Spes had been blind for forty years, the Lord gave him back his sight and disclosed to him the day of his death. He also commanded him to preach the word of life (I St. John 1:1) to those in the monasteries that he founded, so that he who had regained his bodily sight might open the eyes of their hearts.

Abba Spes

4. In obedience to this command, the Elder went round the *cœnobia* of his brethren, entrusting to them the commandments of life (Baruch 3:9), which he had learned through practice. After fifteen days of preaching, he returned to his monastery. He summoned the brothers to the monastery Chapel and, standing in their midst, partook of the Body and Blood of the Master and began chanting with them the mystical hymnody of the Psalter. While they were still chanting, he became engrossed in prayer and gave up his soul to God.

5. All of the brethren beheld a dove emerging from his mouth, and, as the roof of the Chapel opened up before the eyes of the brothers, it ascended to Heaven. Almighty God showed them, through the semblance of a dove, with what simplicity of heart this man had served Him.

B. From St. Diadochos

1. When we become excessively disgruntled on account of the physical infirmities that befall us, we should realize that our soul is still enslaved to the lusts of the body. In its desire for material comforts, it not only does not wish to refrain from the good things of this life, but even reckons it a great disappointment not to be able to enjoy life's pleasures because of illness.

2. But if the soul gladly accepts the distress caused by disease, it is evident that it is not far from the realm of dispassion; hence, it then awaits even death with joy, as affording access to a more genuine life. Just as when wax, if not softened or heated for some time, cannot take the impress of a seal, so also a man, if not tested through pains and illnesses, cannot receive the seal of Divine virtue.

3. For this reason, the Lord says to the Divine Paul: "My Grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9). Paul himself says exultantly: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Corinthians 12:9). By "infirmities" Paul means the assaults of the enemies of the Cross of Christ (Philippians 3:18), which were constantly besetting both him and the Saints at that time, that they might not be exalted, as he himself says, by the abundance of revelations (II Corinthians 12:7). On the contrary, they persisted all the more in the state of perfection through a humility that derived from frequent abase-

ments, preserving this Divine gift of perfection through their holy way of life.

4. By "infirmities" we, today, mean both evil thoughts and bodily maladies. For since, back then, the bodies of the Saints who struggled against sin were delivered to deadly tortures and various other hardships, they were far above the passions that assail human nature as a result of sin. But now that—by the Grace of the Lord—peace prevails in the Churches, it is necessary for the bodies of strugglers for piety to be afflicted by constant illnesses and for their souls to be tested by evil thoughts, so that they might be free from all vainglory and conceit and be able, as I said, to receive in their hearts, through great humility, the seal of Divine beauty, according to the Divine sage, who says: "The light of Thy countenance is signed upon us, O Lord" (Psalm 4:7).

5. We must, therefore, gratefully submit to the Will of the Lord; for, if we do this, our continual illnesses and warfare against demonic thoughts will be reckoned to us as a second martyrdom. The Devil, who back then told the Holy Martyrs through the mouths of iniquitous rulers to deny Christ and desire worldly glory, now manifests himself in person, incessantly saying the same things to the servants of God.

6. The same Devil, who back then tormented the bodies of the righteous and inflicted utter outrages upon honored Teachers through those who served his diabolical designs, now visits various passions, along with many insults and humiliations, on those who confess the true Faith. For this reason, we must unerringly and patiently fulfill the witness of our conscience before God; for, "I waited patiently for the Lord," Scripture says, "and He was attentive unto me" (Psalm 39:2).

C. From the Life of St. Synkletike

1. The blessed Synkletike used to say: "Many are the snares of the Devil. Has he not succeeded in moving souls to evil through poverty? He offers wealth as the bait. Has he not achieved what he wants through insults and taunts? He tempts one with praise and glory. Has he overcome anyone by way of his health? He infects one's body with disease. When he is unable to deceive us through pleasures, he endeavors to lead the soul astray by way of unwanted pains.

2. He inflicts very grave illnesses on us, by God's leave (*cf.* Job 1:12), in order to becloud our love for God and diminish our zeal. But even if your body is lacerated, burns with the severest fevers, or is parched with uncontrollable thirst—if, as a sinner, you endure these things, bring to mind the eternity of Hell, the everlasting fire, and the unbearable torments, and you will not become fainthearted in the face of present tribulations.

3. On the contrary, rejoice, because God has visited you, and keep repeating this consolatory phrase, saying with the Prophet: "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto the death of sin" (*cf.* Psalm 117:18). Were you like iron in your steadfastness? Then, through the fire of tribulations you lose the rust of your passions. Are you righteous, and yet you are ill? Do not be perturbed, for you are progressing from great achievements to still greater achievements. Are you like gold? Then you will prove more brilliant through the fire of afflictions.

4. Has a messenger of Satan been given to your flesh (II Corinthians 12:7)? Then rejoice. See whom you have come to resemble: the great Paul, the luminary of the inhabited earth. Are you tormented by a fever? Are you racked by the cold? Keep in mind, then, that after you have passed through fire and water, you will find your refreshment ready for you, as well.** Having experienced what preceded—that is, the ordeal of fire and cold—expect what follows—that is, rest and refreshment from the Lord.

5. Do not grieve because, on account of bodily infirmity, you are unable to stand at prayer or chant aloud; for all illnesses, and their consequences, are conducive to the subjugation of our carnal desires. Now, fasting and sleeping on the ground are prescribed for the repulsion of shameful pleasures. But if illness has obtunded these desires and pleasures, such ascetic practices are superfluous.

6. Why do I call them superfluous? I should say, rather, that illness is the best and most effective remedy for overcoming the carnal mind (*cf.* Romans 8:6-7). Hence, the greatest ascesis is to endure diseases with patience and to give thanks to God for these afflictions.

7. Have we been deprived of sight by illness? Let us not take it badly,

for we have cast off the organs of cupidity and we behold the Glory of the Lord with our inner eyes.

8. Have we become deaf? Let us be thankful, for we shall no longer be able to hear vain conversations. Instead, we shall always hear the word of the Lord with the ears of our mind.

9. Are we suffering in our hands or our feet? We have been deprived, for our own good, of those members that lead us into sin. We have our inner hands and feet, whereby we shall subdue the Enemy and walk unerringly on the path that leads to Heaven.

10. Is our entire body suffering from illness? This is how our inner man gains perfect health.

11. Let us, therefore, not be dismayed when we fall ill, but let us give thanks to God, Who arranges all things for our benefit and Who oftentimes, through the temporary sickness of our perishable body, bestows eternal health and salvation upon our immortal soul.

D. From the Life of St. Luke

1. A monk by the name of Gregory, who was acquainted with St. Luke, used to spend the holy days of the Great Fast with him. During that time, he did not cease beseeching the Saint to pray to God to deliver him from a chronic malady that vexed him sorely; for he had a weak constitution and suffered greatly from his stomach.

2. Although Luke, out of modesty, put off fulfilling this request, protesting that it was beyond his powers, Gregory, in pain, and yet full of confidence (for he knew what boldness the Saint had before God), did not give up, but persisted importunely in his entreaties, until that wondrous man, unable to fend him off any longer, said: "My poor Gregory, you are going to become healthy, for you will no longer suffer stomach pains from the food that you eat." This came to pass, and from then on Gregory enjoyed good health.

E. From Abba Isaiah

1. Abba Isaiah said: "If you are overcome by illness while keeping si-

lence in your cell, do not be discouraged, but give thanks to the Lord. If your soul is troubled, say to it, 'Is this illness not more profitable to you than the Gehenna for which you are headed?' and you will regain inner peace."

2. The Saint's disciple, Abba Peter, once visited him when he was ill and, seeing his Elder suffering terribly, was upset. The Elder, trying to comfort him, said: "As soon as I fall ill like this, I am able to call to mind the bitter hour of death and judgment. Bodily health, however, is of no benefit to the soul, for the body seeks robustness in order to be at enmity with God. A tree which is watered daily will not wither, but neither will it bear fruit."

3. The same Elder, when he was likewise ill, said to Peter: "Suffering accompanied by the expectation of respite is no burden. Thus, amid the suffering of illness I am not greatly burdened, since I expect to be cured. Instead, I am gripped by fear of that darkest hour, when I shall be cast away from the presence of God; there will then be no one to hear my groaning, and I shall have no expectation of respite from unending torment."

F. From St. Barsanouphios

1. A brother according to the flesh of the great Elder Barsanouphios, a layman who was himself old in years, went to the *cœnobion* in which the Saint resided. He was taken by the monks to meet his brother.

2. The Elder told him the following: "I have Jesus for my brother; if you despise the world and become a monk, then you too will be my brother."

3. On hearing these words, his brother lamented greatly and departed from the *cœnobion*. After a short while, he visited again and renounced the world and became a monk. Some time later, he fell ill with dropsy. He sent word of this to the Elder, beseeching to be relieved of his suffering.

4. The Elder replied to him as follows: "This illness did not come upon you for any other reason than that you should not depart to God without the fruits of ascesis. If, therefore, you endure this trial and give

thanks to God for it, He will reckon it to you as equivalent to the monastic life, since you have not spent many years in the monastic *schema.* In addition, this affliction has befallen you because you ascribed importance to me, who am nothing, and to yourself—to me as a great man and to yourself as the brother of such a man—not realizing that we are both children of Adam's transgression and nothing but earth and ashes.

5. "Give thanks, then, to Him Who has brought you into such a state. If we had the humility of Jesus, we would be able to say: 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' and so on."***

G. From the *Gerontikon*

1. A certain Elder suffered continuously from illness. It so happened that he once passed a whole year without suffering from any illness. He was sorely distressed by this and wept, saying: "God has abandoned me and is not thinking of me."

2. Abba Poimen said: "If three brethren struggle in the same place and one of them lives in silence as he ought, the second is ill and thanks God for it, and the third serves them with a pure mind, then all three are engaged in a single work."

3. Once upon a time, an Elder who lived alone in his cell fell ill. Not having anyone to serve him, when he got up from his bed he would partake of whatever he found in his cell. He did this for many days, and no one went to visit him. After thirty days had passed, since no one had come to see him, God sent an Angel to serve him. The Angel remained with him for seven days.

4. Meanwhile, the brethren finally remembered the Elder, and went to visit him. When they knocked on the door of his cell, the Angel departed and the Elder called out to them from within: "Go away from here, my brothers." After forcing open the door, they went inside and asked him why he had called out. "For thirty days," he told them, "I was very ill and not one of you visited me. And behold, it is now seven days since our Lord sent me His Angel to serve me; but just as you came, the Angel departed from me." No sooner had he finished his account than he reposed. In amazement, the brethren glorified God.

5. An Elder said: "If you become physically ill, do not grow faint-hearted; for if the Master of all desires that you suffer some bodily affliction, who are you to complain? Does He not care for you in all things? Can it be that you live without His will? Therefore, bear this trial with patience and implore God to grant you that which is profitable for you. This is His will: that you abide with long-suffering and take your fill from the Lord's love.****

6. A certain monk, who struggled against Satan in all things, became blind. He did not pray that he might see again, but endured his blindness. In reward for such patience, God restored his sight and he was able to see again.

H. From St. Ephraim

My beloved, if you fall to illness, regardless of how serious it may be, remember the verses: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loveth, He rebuketh, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Proverbs 3:11-12). He who is shut up in prison and plots rebellion against the king, how will he be benefited? But he who falls down before the king and begs his pardon is more likely to arouse him to pity.

* In the Greek text of *The Evergetinos*, this passage is wrongly attributed to St. Diadochos of Photike.

** "We went through fire and water, but Thou broughtest us out into refreshment" (Psalm 65:12).

*** *Cf.* St. Matthew 12:49-50: "And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father Which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."

**** This phrase, "*φάγε ἀγάπην*," can also be translated, "nourish yourself with what the Lord lovingly provides" or "eat what others give to you out of charity"—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XIX

That the righteous are often permitted to die a violent death for some beneficial purpose.

A. From St. Gregory the Dialogist

1. Valentius, who lived in the city of Rome and was my spiritual Father and the Superior of my monastery, previously directed a monastery in the province of Valeria. He recounted how, when the savage Lombards arrived there, they seized two of his monks and hanged them from the branches of trees. After hanging thereon, they died that same day.

2. When evening fell, each of their spirits was heard chanting with loud and clear voices, at which their murderers became very frightened. All of those held captive in the place also heard these voices and subsequently testified that the voices had been chanting. Almighty God willed that the voices of these spirits* be heard in the Lombard encampment, in order that those living in the flesh might learn that, if they served God zealously, they would truly live after their physical death.

3. While I was still living in the aforementioned monastery, I also heard the following story from some very devout men:

4. They told me that in the province called Sura there dwelt a man of holy life by the name of Suranus, the Abbot of a monastery. He gave everything that they had in the monastery to the prisoners who had escaped from the Lombards. After he had given as alms his own clothing and that of the brethren, and all of the provisions in the storeroom, he also distributed whatever he could find in the garden.

5. When everything had been exhausted, the Lombards suddenly fell on him and, after tying him up, demanded gold from him. He assured them that he possessed absolutely nothing. They then led him up to a neighboring mountain, on which there was an immense and densely-wooded forest.

6. A prisoner who had fled there was hiding in the hollow of a tree, and he reported what happened. In this place, one of the Lombards drew his sword and slew the aforementioned pious Suranus. When his corpse fell on the ground, the entire forest and mountain were shaken. The earth, as it were, cried out that it could not bear the weight of his holiness.

7. Another man, very devout in his way of life, was a Deacon in the region of Marsia. The Lombards captured this man, and one of them drew his sword and decapitated him. When his body fell, the man who had cut off his head was seized by an unclean spirit and fell at the feet of the dead man in order to show that, because he had killed a friend of God, he had been delivered to the Enemy of God.

Peter

8. What is the meaning of this, I beg of you, that Almighty God allows such deaths to those whom He reveals after death to be Saints?

Gregory

9. Scripture says that by whatever kind of death the righteous man dies, his righteousness will not be taken away from him [Wisdom of Solomon 4:7; Ezekiel 18:20]; hence, what does it matter to the elect, who are without doubt on the way to eternal life, if they die a harsh or violent death?**

10. Oftentimes, some small flaw remains in the righteous, which needs to be excised by a violent death. For this reason, it sometimes happens that, while they are still alive, the enemies of the righteous are given power over them, in order that, after their death, the cruelty of these evil men might also be avenged through those whom they slew, as in the case of the aforementioned Deacon. He whom God permitted to kill this man was not permitted to gloat over his victim.

11. We can learn this from Holy Scripture, too. For it is related therein that the man of God who was sent to Samaria was killed by a lion on the way, on account of his disobedience. It goes on to say that the lion ate neither the fallen man nor the ass on which he was riding, which shows that the sin of disobedience is forgiven by death itself. The man

whom the same lion killed when he was alive, he dared not touch now that he was dead (III Kings 13:28). For although, while alive, he had succumbed to sin, he was made righteous through a violent death, and the lion that had previously taken the life of a sinful man guarded the corpse of a righteous man after his death.***

12. It often happens that the souls of the righteous become exceedingly fainthearted and fearful of death when they are about to be separated from the body. Concerning one holy man, I learned that he was very frightened when he came to the point of death. But after his death, he appeared to his disciples in a white robe and showed them in what glory he dwelt. From this we infer that, if these men had any small sins, they were completely cleansed through the fear of death.

B. From the Life of St. Stephen the New**

1. While St. Stephen was in the *Prætorium***** and conversing with the other Holy Fathers imprisoned there about soul-profiting and salutary topics, those willing to do what was pleasing to the tyrant• burst in like ferocious beasts, dashing the Saint to the ground and throwing him into confusion. After unfastening the iron chains with which his feet were fettered, they dragged him along the ground and brought him out onto a public street, kicking him, pelting him with stones, smiting him with cudgels, and subjecting him to every kind of torment and abuse.

2. When he had reached the first gate of the *Prætorium* and was passing by the entrance of the Oratory of the Holy Martyr Theodore, he placed his hands on the earth and, raising his head a little, venerated the Martyr for the last time; for not even in the midst of such a terrible situation did he forget the dictates of piety. Seeing him, a bloodthirsty and murderous individual by the name of Philomatios, filled with irrational frenzy, said: "Do you see how the unmentionable one•• wants to die a Martyr?"

3. Having said this, he ran to one of the nearby fire stations (for extinguishing the conflagrations that frequently broke out), and tore off a large beam from it. When he caught up with those who were dragging the Saint along, with all his might he smote him on the head with it, killing him instantly and thereby making Stephen a Martyr and him-

St. Stephen the New

self the most accursed murderer of a Martyr.

4. But see how Divine retribution was not delayed, as is often the case, but came swiftly. As soon as Philomatios had inflicted the fatal blow, he was thrown to the ground, possessed by a demon, grinding his teeth horribly and foaming at the mouth. This scourge held the wretched man in its grip and punished him until the end of his life.

C. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Mark asked Abba Arsenios: "Why is it that when some good men die, their souls are separated from their bodies only after much affliction and great physical hardship?" Abba Arsenios answered: "In order that, seasoned here on earth with the salt of hardship and sufferings, as it were, they might depart to eternity cleansed of sin."

2. In the Lavra of Heptastomos,••• which lies seven *stadia*•••• from the Lavra of St. Savvas, there lived a remarkable anchorite named John. He had a disciple, who, on seeing the atrocities that were being perpetrated by the Persians against the Holy City of Jerusalem, besought his Elder (John the Anchorite) to tell him whether the enemies would capture the city.

3. The Saint refused at first and said: "How, my child, can I, a sinful man, know the answer to your question?"

4. But when the young man persisted in beseeching him and seeking to find an answer to his question, the Elder wept and said to him: "Since I see that you desire earnestly to learn about this matter, my child, I will tell you everything that God has revealed to me. Five days ago, when I was preoccupied by this thought (that is, of the future of the Holy City), and was praying about it, it seemed to me that I was caught up and that I found myself before Golgotha. All of the people, together with the clergy, were crying: 'Lord, have mercy.' Lifting up my gaze, I beheld our Lord Jesus Christ nailed to the Cross and the All-Holy *Theotokos* and Sovereign Lady of the world supplicating Him on behalf of the people. Turning away from those present, Jesus replied: 'I will not hearken to them, because through their sins they have polluted My Altar.'

5. "Crying thus, 'Lord, have mercy,' and sighing deeply, we all went to the Church of St. Constantine. I then withdrew from the crowd and went up to worship at the place in which the Precious Wood of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross is kept. But what a sight I beheld: stinking muck was oozing from the place where the Cross was, flowing into the center of the Church. Two men of priestly stature were standing on either side of the Cross. I said to them: 'Do you not fear God? How can you tolerate this state of filth, on account of which we cannot even pray? What is the source of such great stench?'

6. "Those two men then answered me: 'The iniquities of the clergy of this place are the reason.' Again I asked them: 'Can you not clean up this mud, in order to make it possible for us to pray here?' 'Believe us, brother,' they told me, 'only through fire, and through no other means, can this state of affairs be cleansed.'"

7. As he was saying these things, the Elder wept. When he came to himself, he continued this prophetic narrative to his disciple: "I will also tell you this, my child: It has been ordained that I be beheaded. I implored God very much that I might be reprieved, but He revealed to me that it has been decided and has to be fulfilled."

8. Indeed, while the Elder was relating these things to his disciple, the barbarians invaded the city. The disciple fled in terror, but the Elder was seized by them and slain. After the departure of the barbarians, the disciple returned and found his Elder dead. He wept bitterly and, together with the Fathers, took his Elder and buried him.

9. Abba Moses was once sitting with seven other brethren. The Elder said to them: "Get up and leave, because today the barbarians will come to Sketis." "Will you not flee, too, Abba?" the brethren asked him. The Elder responded: "For so many years I have been waiting for this day, in order that the word of the Master might be fulfilled: 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword' (St. Matthew 26:52). Shall I now flee? In no way will I leave this place."•••••

10. The brethren said to him: "Then we will not leave, either, but will die with you!" "That is not my concern," answered the Elder. "Let each of you consider what his own inclination is." After a short period of silence had passed, he spoke to his disciples again: "Look, the bar-

barians are at the door." At that very moment the barbarians entered and slew them. However, one of the disciples hid behind the door and escaped death. He saw seven wreaths descending and crowning Abba Moses and his six disciples.

* Two and a half sentences have been omitted from the Greek translation of St. Gregory's *Dialogues* used by Monk Paul Evergetinos. We have, therefore, restored these words from the Greek text found in the *Patrologia Latina* (Vol. LXXVII, col. 354AB): "All of those held captive in that place also heard these voices and subsequently testified that the voices had been chanting. Almighty God willed that the voices of these spirits" —*Editors.*

** The words "what does it matter to the elect, who are without doubt on the way to eternal life," are taken from the Latin original (*Patrologia Latina* Vol. LXXVII, col. 356B)—*Editors.*

*** The historical context of the incident here cited is as follows. After the death of Solomon (922 B.C.), Jeroboam, who had been placed at the head of the ten tribes, rebelled against Roboam (Rehoboam), the son and successor of Solomon, and established the Kingdom of Israel, with its capital in Bethel. Two tribes alone, those of Judah and Benjamin, remained loyal to Roboam. His kingdom was called the Kingdom of Judah, and its capital was Jerusalem. In order to sever all ties between the tribes that had separated from each other, and to deter the Israelites under him from going to Jerusalem to worship, Jeroboam fashioned two golden calves and set up one in Bethel and the other in Dan. He decreed that great feasts and idolatrous sacrifices take place there.

The man of God mentioned here, sent by God, came from the Kingdom of Judah to one such sacrifice in Bethel and rebuked King Jeroboam. For this reason, the king wanted to arrest and punish him. However, following a prediction of the man of God, the king's hand was withered; and other miracles occurred. After healing the king, he was allowed to go free. This man of God carried out his mission fully and effectively. However, he had a commandment from God not to eat bread or drink water in that place. To begin with, he kept this commandment scrupulously, not being persuaded to eat even by the king. But when he left by another road, he was deceived by someone, and he ate bread and drank water. On account of this—albeit involuntary—transgression, he was punished, being killed by a lion, so that he might not enter into the land of his fathers. However, as soon as the lion had torn him apart and the prophet had washed away the sin of his transgression through martyrdom, the lion was prevented from approaching his martyred remains and was, in fact, commanded to stand guard over both the man and his ass. (For a more extended narrative, see chapter 13 of the Third Book of Kings.)

**** This is our Holy Father and Confessor Stephen the New, who was martyred for his veneration of the Holy Icons. He is celebrated on November 28 (see the *Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church,* Vol. XI, pp. 640-665).

***** The official residence of a city governor in the Roman Empire—*Trans.*

• Emperor Constantine V Copronymos (reigned 741-775)—*Trans.*

•• The Iconoclasts called their Orthodox opponents *"ἀμνημόνευτοι"* (unmentionables).

••• "The Lavra of Heptastomos was founded by St. Savvas in 510 A.D. in the Judæan desert, in the hills north of the valley of Kidron [Cedron]. It was a relatively

small monastery and could not have had more than twenty monks" (see *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν* [Panorama, Greece: Ekdose Hierou Hesychasteriou "To Genesion tes Theotokou," 1995], Vol. IV, p. 314, n. 14). For the historical background of the Persian invasion of Jerusalem, see the account in Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1966), pp. 155-160—*Trans.*

•••• The "*stadion*" [plural, "stadia"—*Trans.*] was an ancient unit of length, corresponding to 185 meters. [See endnotes for Hypothesis VII, "Martyrios Monastery," and Hypothesis XXII, Book II, where St. Nikodemos offers a slightly variant calculation for the *stadion* in meters—*Editors.*]

••••• Abba Moses was formerly a brigand. After repenting, he became a monk, and for this reason he said that he was waiting to be killed, in order to expiate the murders that he had committed while he was a brigand.

Hypothesis XX

That we should not be surprised when some misfortune befalls righteous men.

A. From Palladios

1. On Mount Nitria there was a wondrous ascetic by the name of Benjamin, who had lived a virtuous life for eighty years. Having attained to the pinnacle of virtue by his ascesis, he was granted the gift of healing, so that everyone on whom he laid hands, or whom he blessed, or to whom he gave oil, was delivered from whatever sickness plagued him.

2. Eight months before his repose, he contracted dropsy, and his body swelled up so much that it was impossible for anyone to reach around his little finger even with both hands. Unable to look upon his terrible suffering, we averted our eyes from him.

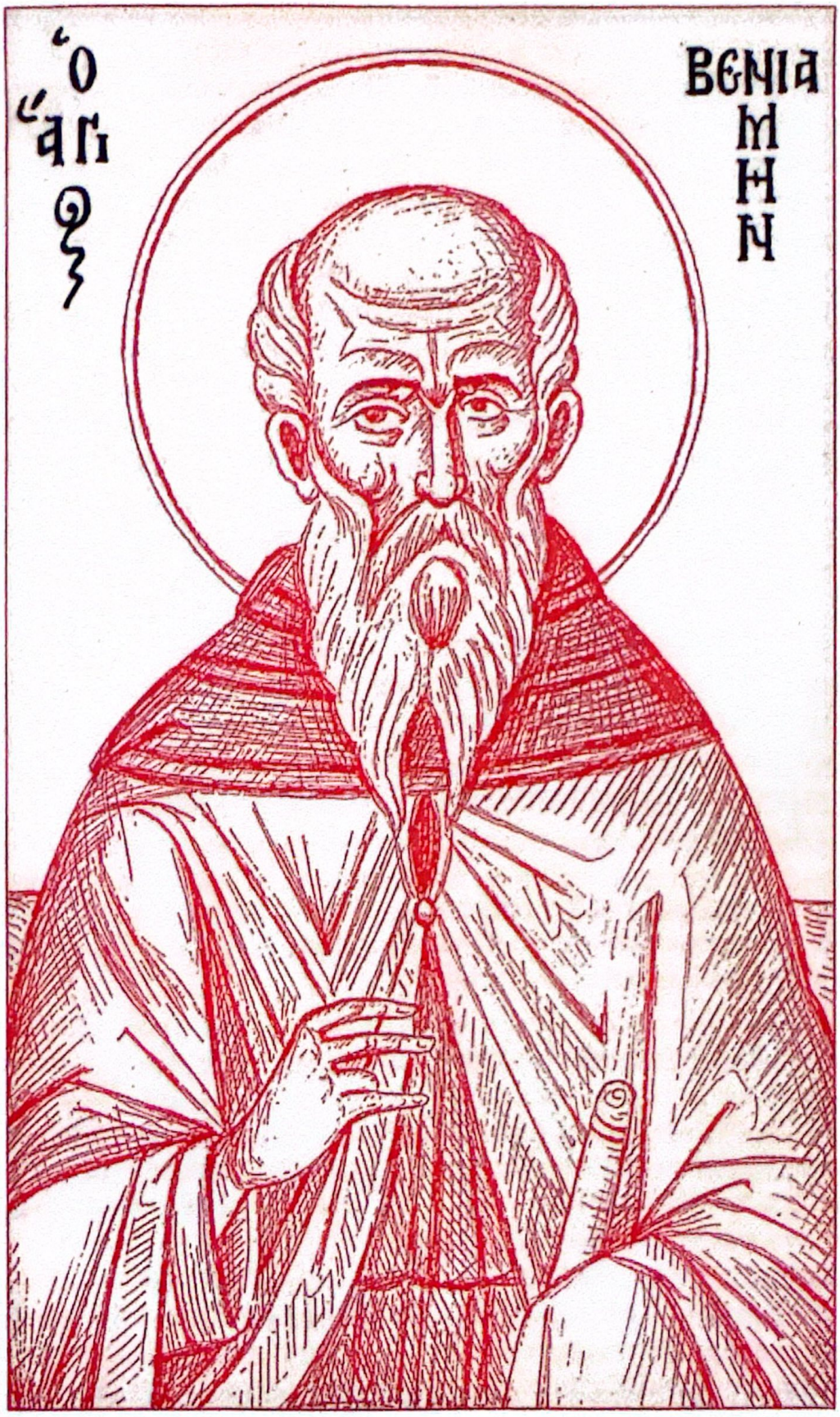
3. The blessed man then said to us: "Pray, my children, that my inner man not contract dropsy; for this body neither benefited me when it was in good health, nor has it harmed me now that it is in poor health."

4. During those eight months, the seat on which he sat was made very wide, since he was no longer able to recline on a bed. From there he fulfilled his various bodily needs; and yet, in spite of this incurable condition, he healed others of whatever disease beset them.

5. When he died, so greatly swelled was the body of the blessed and ever-memorable Benjamin, that the lintel and jambs of the door had to be removed, so that his body could be carried out of his cell.

B. From the Same Author

1. Stephen, a Libyan by nationality—from the coast of Marmarica and Mareotis—pursued the monastic life for sixty years, ultimately becoming perfect in asceticism and capable of discerning people's



St. Benjamin

thoughts.

2. He was granted a gift of such a kind that everyone who came to him, in whatever kind of distress he might be, departed from him free of sorrow. Now, Ammonios and Evagrios, who visited him often, related the following circumstance to me, which they knew from their personal experience:

3. "He once felt profoundly ill, having developed a cancerous ulcer in the vicinity of his private parts. He was being looked after by a physician, and yet this did not impede him from his handiwork (weaving palm leaves) or from conversing with us, enduring his misfortune with such gratitude and patience that it was as if someone else were suffering and not himself; even while flesh was being cut away like locks of hair, he remained unaffected, owing to the excellence of his spiritual preparation.

4. "When the blessed one perceived that we were upset over his condition, he said to us: 'Do not be aggrieved, my children; for God does nothing that He does out of malice, but for a good purpose. Perhaps these fleshly parts were liable to chastisement, and it is more advantageous for them to pay the penalty here on earth than after my departure from this arena.'

5. "Consoling us in this way with words about patience, he strengthened us to persevere amid afflictions and not to be at all surprised if even holy people suffer such trials."

C. From St. Gregory the Dialogist

1. The Bishop of the Church in the city of Ancona was a very pious man by the name of Marcellinus. His feet were so severely racked with gout that he was unable to walk at all; when he needed to go out, his friends would carry him in their arms.*

2. One day, on account of carelessness on someone's part, an enormous conflagration broke out in the aforementioned city. When the fire began to spread wildly throughout Ancona, and the flames could not be extinguished by any human contrivance but threatened to destroy the entire city (a large part of which had already been consumed), the

Bishop arrived, carried in the arms of his friends. Sorely distressed over the destruction of his city, he commanded those carrying him to take him and place him in the path of the fire. This was done, and he was placed in that location where the full force of the fire appeared to be concentrated.

3. The fire then began to turn back on itself in a miraculous way, as though out of respect for the Bishop, and emitting a cry, as it were, that it could not pass over him. Checked in this manner, therefore, and turning back on itself, the fire was totally extinguished. Do you thus not perceive, Peter, what virtue this man possessed, that, unable to move and seated, he extinguished such a fire through prayer?**

Peter

4. I perceive it and I am astonished.

D. From the Life of St. Synkletike

1. When the Devil, who hates what is good, saw the Blessed Synkletike easily flying above his snares, and not only her, but also many other nuns whom she trained through both her deeds and her teachings to overcome him, he demanded permission from God to subject her to one final contest (*cf.* Job 2:6-7). He attacked her by introducing a horrible disease into her entrails, and he inflicted terrible damage on her lungs—those most vital organs—causing her unbearable pain,*** and in this way he gradually sapped her life.

2. Now that Satan had received permission to torment her, he was able to bring about her demise in a fairly short time. But he, like a bloodthirsty executioner, sought to gratify his innate cruelty by infecting her with a multitude of diseases and by prolonging her ordeal, endeavoring to make her give up her struggle, in the face of such chronic and grievous agonies.

3. To this end, he destroyed her lungs by gradually causing them to disintegrate through repeated expectoration; in addition, he caused her to burn with unremitting fevers, which worked away at her much-suffering body like a blacksmith's rasp.

4. Just as judges, whenever they want to subject condemned crimi-

nals to severer punishments, order them to be burned gradually over a slow fire, so also the Enemy, by kindling a fire in her entrails, consumed and devoured her entire body, inflicting this torment on her unceasingly, by night and by day.

5. For three and a half years this brave woman battled against the Enemy through these glorious sufferings, enduring her diseases courageously and gratefully. She did not lose heart, but rather armed herself still more valiantly against her adversary; and through her teachings, she healed many who had been wounded by him.

6. Beholding her valiant struggles, the Devil was vexed and, unable to endure such a defeat, afflicted the Saint with another very grievous torment: he injured her vocal organs, contriving, in his craftiness, to prevent her from speaking, thereby depriving many of the benefit that came from her.

7. But although those who came to visit her were deprived of the profit of hearing her words, their eyes gained greater benefits; for when her visitors contemplated the severity of her suffering and perceived how steadfast and dignified that blessed woman was in her endurance of pain, they too were fortified in spirit and became bolder in waging war against the Enemy.

8. From what part of the body did the Enemy begin this plague? From her mouth, whence the sweet streams of her words proceeded. After he had induced a toothache in one of her molars, her gums immediately putrified. The molar fell out and the abscess that was formed spread to her entire lower jaw, the flesh of which rotted. Within forty days, all of the bones of the lower jaw decayed, and after two months an aperture appeared in her cheek. The entire surrounding area was blackened and the bones, which were visible through the aperture, gradually decomposed.

9. The stench that flowed from the putrefaction was so strong and unbearable that the nuns who served the Saint could not go near her, on account of the horrible fœtor. If it happened that they were summoned to approach the Saint in order to attend to some urgent need of hers, they would first light a large quantity of incense and then enter her cell, withdrawing quickly, since they were unable to endure that dreadful

stench.

10. The valiant Synkletike, as if beholding her adversary standing before her very eyes, courageously fought against him, not permitting her disease to be alleviated by any human aid whatsoever. A large group of women who came to see her one day asked if they could anoint her wounds with some unguent, as a concession to their weakness, in order that, by mitigating the stench as much as possible, they might make it tolerable to spend time with her. But the blessed ascetic would not consent, reckoning that if she received human assistance she would be disqualified from the glorious contest.

11. The sisters who were present sent for a physician and attempted, through him, to persuade the Saint to accept medical treatment. Once again, however, she would not hear of it, and said: "Why do you hinder me from this good struggle? Why do you regard what is on the surface (that is, the wounds), ignoring what is hidden (that is, the envy of the Devil) and my struggle against him? Why are you preoccupied with what is happening, while failing to consider the one who is responsible for these events?"

12. The physician replied to her: "We are not offering medicine for the sake of curing you or giving you relief, but in order to bury the rotten and deadened parts, lest the nuns that are present suffer harm. We will do for the dead members of your body what people do for the dead; I will apply to your putrid flesh aloe and myrtle which I have steeped in wine."****

13. The Saint accepted his advice and agreed to be treated, though more out of compassion for her assembled disciples. The excessive fœtor was thereby purged. She engaged in the remainder of her contest for three months,***** her body being held together solely by Divine power, owing to the atrophy of the flesh and members that constituted it. She could neither partake of food, in view of the overwhelming putrefaction and the stench; nor could she sleep at all, for she was constantly afflicted by very acute pains, which interrupted her sleep and drove it away.

14. As she approached the end of her contest and was about to be wreathed with the crown of righteousness, she beheld with the eyes of

her soul visitations of Angels, the splendor of ineffable light, and choirs of holy virgins urging her to ascend on high.

15. As if returning to herself, she recounted to those present what she saw. She exhorted them to endure sufferings courageously and not to grow fainthearted; and she added: "After three days, I shall be parted from my body at this very hour."

16. After three days had passed, at the hour that she had foretold, she departed to the Lord, to receive in reward for her struggles a blessed life in Heaven and the enjoyment of eternal good things.

* The more modern Greek rendering of this text says that the Bishop was carried on a "litter." We have added the words, "his friends would carry him in their arms" (literally, "by their hands") from the Greek text in the *Patrologia Latina* (Vol. LXXVII, col. 181A)—*Editors.*

** We have restored the words, "through prayer," which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos,* from the Greek text in the *Patrologia Latina* (Vol. LXXVII, col. 181D)—*Editors.*

*** Probably tuberculosis.

**** Aloe is a plant with medicinal properties, and "aloes" is also the name of its sap, which is dried like resin. Myrtle is commonly called "*μυρτιά*" in Greek. Wine also has disinfectant and astringent properties on account of the alcohol that it contains.

***** We have added the words, "three months," which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos,* from the text printed in the *Patrologia Græca* (Vol. XXVIII, col. 1556D)—*Editors.*

Hypothesis XXI

That the Christian, even when deprived of life's necessities for his own benefit, should not straightforward become fainthearted, but should give thanks to the Lord and wait on Him and hope without hesitation that God, in His goodness, will unfailingly provide for him. As well, that it is shameful for an ascetic, who is a servant of God, to associate with worldly people and to ask for what he needs, even if he is burdened by indigence.

A. From the Life of St. Theodosios the Cœnobiarch

1. It was the first and the queen of Feasts; I mean, Holy Pascha. It was the evening of the holy night itself,* and the disciples of the great Theodosios, who were then twelve in number, had no basic provisions—neither bread, nor olive oil, nor anything else to eat. They were distressed by this dearth of supplies, not only for their own sake,** but also because they had no bread to offer at the Divine Liturgy, so that they would have to celebrate Pascha without the Mystical Sacrifice of the Body of Christ. Standing round their teacher, they reported to him the complete lack of victuals.

2. He replied to them as follows: "Only the Holy Table should be prepared. As for the rest, let no one be concerned about anything. For He Who of old fed Israel in the wilderness, when there were so many thousands of people,*** and then later on fed a sizeable crowd, and that to satiety****—the Same will provide for us, for neither is He now any weaker than before, nor has He become less alacritous in supplying our needs."

3. This is what he told them. Our account will now relate how his words swiftly came to fruition and how he did not disappoint the hopes of his disciples. For, just as of old a sheep ready for sacrifice appeared to Abraham on a plant of Sabec,***** so now something similar happened in the case of the Blessed Theodosios.

4. The sun had already set when a man arrived leading a pair of mules laden with various foods suitable for ascetics. The bread of the Holy Table

that is both seen with the eyes and perceived by the mind was not absent from this load, but was included along with the other items, and in this bread the disciples of St. Theodosios took greater delight. The provisions brought by this man lasted them until Pentecost.

5. On another occasion, the following incident took place. A certain wealthy man, who had resolved to become rich in good deeds, was in the habit of distributing his property in almsgiving, converting his possessions thereby into precious material for the salvation of souls. This man would give lavishly to all in need, and especially to those who lived far from the world in order to be close to God. Yet, he never gave anything to Theodosios' monks, either because he had forgotten about them or because he did not know about them—or perhaps because God was testing the Saint or wished to glorify him.

6. His disciples, therefore, approached the Saint and pestered him to make both himself and themselves known to the almsgiver. And they persisted in this endeavor with great eagerness, since they had no means of feeding themselves in the immediate future. They had a few carob pods at their disposal, and sometimes, when they had finished these, they would roast date pits and eat them in order to assuage their hunger.

7. Thus, through their pusillanimity, they urged St. Theodosios, a man who ever strove to live unnoticed by others and who was accustomed to directing his gaze to God alone, to disclose himself, pressing him to stretch out his hands to men as a beggar, and thereby to forsake the open hand of Him Who fills every living creature out of His goodwill,• as if accusing that hand, for the time being, of stinginess or parsimony.

8. The disciples of St. Theodosios were despondent, but he exhorted them gently, saying: "Who among those who have placed their confidence in God has ever been completely abandoned? Who, having waited patiently on God unto the end, has not received consolation from Him? It is God Who gives drink to every thirsty soul—let the Divine Jeremiah say this with us••—and fills every hungry soul; it is He Who prepares food for the ravens and for the younglings of ravens, to cite Job••• and the Divine David,•••• speaking with one voice.

9. "Let us learn how much difference there is between human solic-

itude and Divine Providence, which extends even to the smallest details, and we will understand how it is that we will again abundantly enjoy, by Christ's Providence, those things which we willingly forsook for the sake of Christ."

10. This is what he told them; and after a short time someone appeared, leading an animal loaded with various goods. This man was not heading towards the monastery of St. Theodosios, but was intending to pass by it and deposit his burden elsewhere. When he was already close to the monastery, the beast, against the man's will, came to a halt and, although he whipped it hard many times, remained motionless, like a rock.

11. Correctly supposing that this was not happening without God's Will, the man immediately changed places with his animal and, using the animal to guide him, relaxed his grip on the bridle and allowed it to go wherever its impulses might carry it. When he did so, the animal at once went nowhere else than straight to the monastery of St. Theodosios, as if someone were invisibly pulling on its bridle and directing it.

12. After entering the monastery and ascertaining the tremendous indigence that beset the monks, he marveled at how the ineffable Providence of God had brought it about that, while the distress of poverty should be an occasion of crowns for the ascetics, he should be the one to relieve this distress. And he realized that the animal had quite evidently been refractory because Providence was summoning him to feed souls that served God, but were suffering on account of the weakness of the body, the servant of the soul.

13. On learning this, he provided them with twice the amount of alms that the aforementioned benefactor was accustomed to giving. Thenceforth, the disciples ceased to pester St. Theodosios or to worry about petty needs, but strove, rather, to emulate their spiritual Father and to vie with him in showing hope and faith in God.

B. From the Life of St. Savvas

1. While the blessed Savvas was endeavoring to construct more cells in Castellion••••• and to turn this place into a *cœnobion*, the monks under him were in dire straits, since there was no one to furnish them

with their necessary provisions. God, in Whose honor the site was being rendered habitable, Who has commanded us not to worry about what we shall eat or what we shall drink,† and Who is more loving than our mother and cares for us more than our father, came to the assistance of St. Savvas by sending a vision to Marcian, one of His chosen, who was the spiritual leader of the *cœnobia* in Bethlehem and who provided generally for the needs of all the monks throughout that region.

2. One night, Marcian beheld a wondrous Angelic form that shone with a pleasant and very beautiful light and which told him the following: "You, Marcian, pass the night free of sorrow and untroubled, not lacking anything needful for the body, whereas the servant of God Savvas—who out of his great love for the Master undergoes many hardships in Castellion, together with some of his brothers—is frequently destitute of vital supplies, as there is no one to provide them with even a little of what they need. Therefore, give to him of what you have and do not put off doing this, lest he be further oppressed by want."

3. Thus did the vision inform Marcian. Without further ado, he dispatched many provisions to Savvas, using his monastery's beasts of burden to transport them. On receiving the goods that had been sent, and on learning the reason why they had been sent, Savvas regarded this as a token of God's approval of their settlement of that place. At the same time, he both thanked the Lord yet more fervently and set about constructing the *cœnobion* with greater alacrity.

4. After this, Patriarch Elias of Jerusalem, being eager to gather close to himself the more zealous among the monks who had previously lived in cells scattered around the Tower of David,†† built a monastery for them near his episcopal residence, beside the Church of the Holy Resurrection. When all of these monks had been assembled there, the Divine Savvas, after purchasing many of the cells from which the monks had departed, converted them into a guest-house for visitors to the Lavra.

5. He wanted also to purchase other cells that were both close to the Lavra and suitable for the same purpose, but a lack of money impeded the fulfillment of this desire; and although he was very eager to acquire these cells, he had no one who could help him, since he had nothing left save half a *solidus*.†††

6. However, Savvas, knowing God's munificence, wisdom, and omnipotence, and entrusting the entire matter to Him, gave the owners of the cells what he still had as a deposit, promising them that if he did not pay the remaining amount the next day, he would forfeit what he had already deposited.

7. Having made this agreement with the monks, Savvas looked only to the inexhaustible right hand of God. His thoughts, since they were in accordance with God's Will, were rewarded in a miraculous way. There came to the Lavra a stranger who was completely unaware of Savvas' situation. He came as if sent by God and, without saying anything or hearing any request from Savvas, gave the Fathers one hundred seventy gold *solidi*. After making this donation, he immediately departed, not even telling them his name.

8. Savvas, realizing at once that God was obviously the source of this very prompt largesse, immediately paid the price of the cells and constructed a hospice for monks visiting from foreign places. He also acquired two hostels for Castellion, one in the Holy City and the other in Jericho.

9. Subsequently, after the unjust banishment of Patriarch Elias of Jerusalem, a terrible famine and a dearth of necessities, not to mention a drought, a plague of locusts, and other severe scourges beset Palestine for five whole years. Throughout this time, the Divine Savvas did not busy himself in providing income for any of the seven monasteries which he had founded and which, with God's help, he oversaw, but entrusted all concern for their maintenance to God.

10. These monasteries, as one might expect, suffered from a lack of material goods; and yet, St. Savvas was neither affected by this situation nor did he utter any complaint about it. On the contrary, assembling the Abbots of the aforementioned monasteries, he appealed to them not to be distressed over this tribulation or to be at all concerned about their bodily needs, but to have confidence in their Heavenly Father, "Who knows," he told them, "that we have need of these things and that we depend on His munificent right hand to provide us with them."

11. The blessed soul of the Holy Savvas was replete with courage and gratitude to God, and this enabled him to face various trials un-

murmuringly. At one time, it happened that his own Lavra was so short of basic necessities that even the *prosphoron* indispensable for the customary Sunday Liturgy was not to be found. The monk charged with looking after the Church approached the Saint and informed him of this calamity, saying: "Father, it will be impossible for us to celebrate the Liturgy on Sunday, because we have neither bread nor any of the other requisite items."

12. Such were his words; but the Saint's truly great and wondrous soul did not despair of God's care or of the ineffable ways of His Providence. "In no way," he told them, "do I think that we will be prevented from celebrating the Divine Liturgy. If we are so lacking in provisions, then we will use one of the costly offerings from among those items donated by pilgrims to purchase what is necessary for the Divine Liturgy. But faithful is He Who enjoined us not to be anxious about the morrow" (St. Matthew 6:34).

13. Indeed, the Saint's confidence in God was richly rewarded. Before Sunday arrived, some men—veritable angels of Divine Providence—came to the Lavra, leading a convoy of thirty pack animals loaded with wheat, wine, oil, and other food appropriate for monastics. The amount of food was so great that there was almost no room for it in the Lavra.

14. The Divine Savvas immediately called the monk who a short while before had informed him of their indigence with such faintheartedness and asked him: "Well, what do you say? Shall we forgo the Divine Liturgy?" The monk, realizing that the purpose of this question was to reprove the thoughts of those who lack the strength to hope in God, fell at the feet of St. Savvas, begging forgiveness and fervently repenting for the ignoble pusillanimity that he had displayed.

15. The Saint quickly forgave his disciple and advised him not to be fainthearted, but to hope with confidence in God and to cast his care upon Him, as David says,†††† because God cares for us much more than do our natural fathers.

C. From St. Ephraim

1. Brother, if you happen to fall ill, do not write about your needs to your kinsfolk according to the flesh, or to other acquaintances and

friends in the world, and do not have recourse to human help and protection, to which you have died, but endure, hoping rather in the Lord and awaiting His mercy to guide you in all things.

2. For He Who has permitted you to become ill for your benefit will provide for you and will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, as Scripture says.†††† Let us, therefore, strive to be well-pleasing to Him in all things, because He cares for us (*cf.* I St. Peter 5:7).

3. I know a brother who once fell ill but forced himself to work and, weeping privately in his cell, besought the Lord to grant him health, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, I know that bodily sickness is for the healing of my soul, but lest I become a burden to my brothers, I beseech Thee, in Thy love for mankind, heal my soul and my body by Thy Grace, for Thou art the God of mercy and the Healer of our souls and bodies; accept my repentance and show in me Thy greatness and Thine infinite and unsearchable mercies, which are without number."

4. By supplicating God in this manner, he was immediately healed, even as he worked.

D. From Abba Isaiah

1. Brother, attend diligently to yourself, since you are always in the presence of God. Do not hope for anything from anyone save God alone, and that with faith. If you have need of anything, beseech God to fulfill your need according to His will, and in whatever circumstances you find yourself, give thanks to God always, because it is He Who has arranged things for you thus.

2. If you are entirely deprived of something, do not hope in man or be distressed, and do not grumble against anyone. Rather, endure eagerly and calmly, reflecting as follows: "I am deserving of many afflictions on account of my sins, but if God wishes to show mercy to me, He is able to do so." If you think along these lines, He will fulfill your every need.

3. When one man benefits another by word or by deed, let them both confess that this is a gift of God. He who does not understand this will be dominated by the one who does.‡

4. He who praises his neighbor out of hypocrisy or with a view to receiving something in return will in time rebuke his neighbor and will himself be put to shame.

5. When someone provides you with material assistance and you praise him as good in his own right, ignoring the fact that only God is good, he will subsequently appear evil to you.

6. All good things come from the Lord according to His Providence, and those who convey them are simply ministers of what is good.

7. The mole that burrows under the earth, being blind, is unable to look up at the stars; and he who does not trust that God will provide him with temporal goods is unable to trust that He will provide him with eternal goods.

8. True knowledge has been given to men by God as a Grace that precedes the Grace of the Heavenly Kingdom, teaching those who partake thereof to believe above all in Him Who grants it.

9. One no longer quarrels with his neighbor about those things which he hopes to receive from God.

10. Ignorance is the first of all evils; the second is lack of faith.

E. From Abba Isaac

1. If you believe that God makes provision for you, why are you anxious and concerned about temporal matters and the needs of your flesh?

2. But if you do not believe that God makes provision for you, and for this reason you are at pains to provide for your needs apart from Him, you are the most miserable of all men. Why even go on living?

3. "Cast thy care upon the Lord" (Psalm 54:23), and you will never be afraid of any terror that overtakes you (*cf.* Proverbs 3:25). Insofar as you have dedicated yourself to God, you may go through life with peace of mind.

F. From St. Maximos

You should love every man wholeheartedly, but you should place your hope in God alone and serve Him with all of your strength. For if He protects us, all of our friends will treat us with respect and all of our enemies will prove powerless against us. But when He abandons us, all of our friends will turn away from us,‡‡ while all of our enemies will prevail over us.

G. From the *Gerontikon*

1. An Elder said: "Since they have God within them, the Saints inherit, through dispassion, both the things of this life and the things of the future life; for both earthly and heavenly goods belong to Christ, and those who have Christ within them also have what belongs to Him. But he who has a worldly mentality—that is, he who is beset by the passions—even if he should conquer the world, possesses nothing but the passions that rule him."

2. Abba Evprepios said: "If you believe that God is trustworthy and powerful, hope in Him alone and you will share in His benefactions; but if you are fainthearted, it is obvious that you do not believe Him to be either trustworthy or powerful. For if you do not believe that God can help you in your personal affairs, how can you believe Him to be powerful and omnipotent in other matters?"

3. It was said of Abba Moses in Sketis that when he was minded to go to Petra,‡‡‡ to the cave in which he would eventually settle, he became weary while journeying thither and said to himself: "How can I obtain here the water that I need?" And a voice came to him and said: "Go into the cave, and do not worry about anything."

4. So he went inside. After this, some of the Fathers visited him, but he did not have anything other than a flask of water, which he had used up in boiling a small quantity of lentils. In his grief and anguish, the Elder began to go in and out of the cave, praying to God; and behold, a cloud came over Petra and it rained so much that it filled all of his cisterns.

5. After this, the Fathers who were visiting him asked him: "Tell us, why did you keep going in and out of the cave?" The Elder replied to them: "I was arguing with God, and I said to Him: 'Thou broughtest me

here; yet behold, I have no water for Thy servants to drink.' That is why I was going to and fro, entreating God until He sent us the water that we needed."

6. Abba Silouan said: "I am a servant, and my Lord said to me: 'Do My work, and I will nourish you, but do not inquire how.' Therefore, if I work, I am nourished by my wages, that is, by the mercy of God."

7. A certain man offered money to an Elder, saying: "Take this to cover your expenses; for you have grown old and you are ill." (The Elder was, in fact, a leper.) "For sixty years I have been in this condition," replied the Elder, "and I have lacked nothing, because God unfailingly provides for me and feeds me. And now you come here to take away Him Who nourishes me?" Thus, he refused to accept the money.

8. The Fathers related the following concerning a certain gardener: that he gave what he earned from his work in alms, keeping only what he needed for his own expenses. Satan subsequently whispered this thought to him: "Set aside a little cash for when you grow old, or in case you become ill and have bills to pay." The gardener set some money aside and filled a jar with coins.

9. After this, it so happened that he fell ill, and his foot became gangrenous. He expended all of his savings on doctors, but received no benefit at all. Later on, an experienced doctor came to him and told him: "If your foot is not amputated, your whole body will rot." In view of this diagnosis, it was decided that the gangrenous foot would be amputated the following day.

10. That night, the gardener came to himself and, repenting for what he had done—namely, accumulating money and hoping in that rather than in God, Who governs and sustains all things—he wept and said with sighs: "Recall, O Lord, the acts of charity, however inadequate, that I used to perform when I was working and providing for my brethren; or rather, instead of these, call forth Thy goodness and Thine infinite tender mercies, and have mercy on me according to Thy great and abundant mercy."

11. No sooner had he said these things than an Angel of the Lord appeared before him and said to him: "Where are the savings that you

amassed? What became of the plan that you conceived?" Moved by these words to profound compunction, the gardener said with tears: "I have sinned, O Lord, forgive me. Henceforth, I will no longer do this." Then the Angel touched the gangrenous foot and it was healed at once. He rose at dawn and went to work in his field.

12. Shortly after he left, the doctor came, as arranged, to amputate the infected foot. Not finding the gardener, he asked after him and was told: "He left early in the morning to work in his field." The doctor, wishing to see him, went to the field in which he was working, and when he saw him tilling the soil, glorified God, Who had healed him in such an extraordinary fashion.

13. An ascetic who was assailed by thoughts of avarice used to toil greatly. From his handiwork, he earned one *solidus* at first, and then two, and after that, three; he then strove to make them five in number. After accumulating five *solidi*, he immediately fell gravely ill, and his foot swelled and became covered with sores.

14. The monk sent for doctors and spent the five *solidi* on medical treatment. However, not only was he not cured, but he grew even worse, in that his foot became completely infected. Finally, a doctor visited him and told him: "Your foot will have to be cut off, Abba, because otherwise the putrefaction will spread through your whole body." Out of necessity, the monk assented to the amputation, and it was decided that his foot should be amputated the following day.

15. That night, as the monk wept and implored God to have pity on him, an Angel of the Lord stood before him and said: "Did you succeed in earning five *solidi*?" The monk fell into ecstasy and the Angel grasped his foot, cleansed it of its sores, healing him instantly, and disappeared. Having come to, and realizing that he had been cured, the monk thanked God.

16. The doctor came very early in the morning, as arranged. He knocked on the door of the cell and the monk rose from his bed, completely well, and went to meet him. When the doctor saw him walking, he was astonished. After learning what had happened, he became a Christian, having previously been a pagan.

* At this point, I have followed the version of the Life of St. Theodosios by St.

Symeon Metaphrastes in the *Patrologia Græca* (Vol. CXIV, col. 485D)—*Trans.*

** That is, because they had no food for the festal meal—*Trans.*

*** "And the children of Israel ate manna for forty years" (Exodus 16:35).

**** "And they did all eat, and were filled" (St. Matthew 14:20).

***** "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and beheld, and lo, behind him a ram caught by his horns in a plant of Sabec" (Genesis 22:13).

• "The eyes of all look to Thee in hope, and Thou givest them their food in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and fillest every living thing with Thy favor" (Psalm 144:15-16).

•• "For I have saturated every thirsting soul, and filled every hungry soul" (Jeremiah 38:25). This quotation is missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos* (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CXIV, col. 489A)—*Editors.*

••• "Who hath prepared food for the raven? For its young ones wander and cry to the Lord, in search of food" (Job 38:41).

•••• "Who giveth to the cattle their food, and to the young ravens that call upon Him" (Psalm 146:9).

••••• "The Hill of Castellium (in Greek, "Castellion"), or Khirbet Mird, was the site of the Herodian fortress of Hyrcania. It was an ideal site for a monastery, as the rock formation provides large natural water-cisterns" (Cyril of Scythopolis, *Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, trans. R.M. Price, Introduction and Notes by John Binns [Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991], p. 212, n. 30—*Editors.*

† "Therefore take no thought, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or, 'What shall we drink?' or, 'Wherewithal shall we be clothed?'" (St. Matthew 6:31).

†† "The Tower of David on Mount Sion was a monastic quarter in Jerusalem, which included hermits' cells, monasteries (including a large Georgian monastery), and guest houses of the desert monasteries" (Cyril of Scythopolis, *Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, p. 212, n. 39)—*Editors.*

††† The *solidus* was the basic unit of coinage in the Roman Empire from 312 A.D.—*Trans.*

†††† "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall nourish thee" (Psalm 54:23).

††††† "[B]ut God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

‡ Sections 3-10 are from St. Mark the Ascetic—*Editors.*

‡‡ We have restored the words "all of our friends will turn away from us," which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*, from the *Φιλοκαλία* (Athens: Ekdotikos Oikos "Aster," 1975), Vol. II, p. 51—*Editors.*

‡‡‡ Petra was a region in the inner desert near Mount Troe (or Tura, southeast of Cairo). Abba Moses was advised by St. Makarios the Great to withdraw to this place in order to live alone in silence (see Abba Makarios, §22, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 272B)—*Editors.*

Hypothesis XXII

Concerning that hope in Christ which is imprudent.

A. From Abba Isaac the Syrian

1. There is a hope in God deriving from the faith of the heart, which is true, since it is spawned by discernment and knowledge. There is also a distorted hope, proceeding from foolishness and sluggishness, which is false.

2. For the man who gives no thought at all to perishable things, but commends his whole self to God, constantly putting all of his time and effort into serving and pleasing Him night and day—and for this reason neglecting to take care of his bodily needs—rightly and prudently hopes in the Lord, because the Lord will furnish him with what he needs.

3. It is right that God should show all of His concern for such a man and provide unstintingly for his needs, for he is His genuine servant and keeps His commandment, which says: "[S]eek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matthew 6:33).

4. To him who thus wholly dedicates himself to the service of God, the whole world, like some slave, readily provides for him, is subject to his will, and carries out his commands, obeying him as master in all things.

5. For in order that he might not desist from standing before God or from continuous intercourse with Him, thus being unceasingly preoccupied with this alone, not allowing himself to be concerned with anything else at all, it is meet for all of creation to serve him and to provide for all of his needs without any exertion or anxiety on his part, obeying the commands of their common Master, Who nourishes His true servants like the birds of the air (St. Matthew 6:26), without their having to toil or worry.

6. The hope of such a man is proper and rational, and it is not possible for one who is thus disposed not to attain to that for which he hopes.

7. But if anyone, having his mind still fixed on the earth and on earthly concerns; like the serpent, feeding from the soil; allowing his heart to engage in flights of fancy, which only bring him into captivity, and indulging in vain talk, says, stretching out his legs in idleness, "I trust that God will provide for my needs"—such a man will assuredly hear the following words from God, speaking to him through the Prophet: "[Thou drawest] nigh unto Me with thy mouth, ...but [thy] heart is far from Me" (Isaiah 29:13), and "[Thou desirest] to know My ways," asking for judgment and justice "as one that has done righteousness, and has not forsaken [My] statutes" (*cf.* Isaiah 58:2). Likewise, James, the Brother of God, will say to him: "[If] thou believest [in] God, thou doest well: the demons also believe, and tremble"; but faith needs works, and "faith without works is dead" (St. James 2:19-20).

8. Make no mistake, O fool: toil and sweat for God's sake in the cultivation of the virtues precede hope in Him. Therefore, if you believe that God provides for His creatures and is omnipotent, show that your works are congruent with your faith, and then God will hearken to you and provide you with all that you need, without any effort on your part; and furthermore, He will deliver you from every peril, harm, and affliction.

9. For God has commanded all other men to manage their own affairs with discretion and to combine with His Providence the knowledge that they have received from Him.

10. However, he who has dedicated his whole life to God, and whose sole concern is to please Him, has no need to administer his affairs with this kind of knowledge; for in place of this, he possesses faith, whereby he casts down "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (II Corinthians 10:5). He does not accept human or natural thoughts, since he has transcended nature and cleaved to God through the unhesitating and steadfast faith through which he boldly undertakes everything, not as one tempting the Lord, but as one being confident in Him and armed with the invincible power of the Spirit.

11. About such a man God will say truly: "I am with him in affliction, and I will deliver him, and glorify him. ...With length of days will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation" (Psalm 90:15-16).

Hypothesis XXIII

That one should violate not even the least commandment on account of bodily necessity, no matter how pressing it may be, or on account of human fear.

A. From the Life of St. John the Merciful

1. Since a great multitude had escaped from the Persian onslaught and taken refuge in Alexandria, where food was very scarce (because at that time the Nile had not risen as it usually does*), and since the Church's funds had been exhausted, the great John was compelled to borrow a thousand pounds of gold from certain persons.

2. When he had used these up, too, he became gravely concerned and besought God, in His love for mankind, to provide him with a way out of this impasse. However, even when reduced to such penury, he was not overwhelmed by his misfortune, and neither did he violate the Divine laws and the sacred Canons nor was he any the less conscientious in his guidance of the flock entrusted to him.

3. Now, one of the lower clergy (perhaps a Reader), who had contracted a second marriage, was extremely wealthy and also wanted to become a Deacon. Therefore, when he learned of the Patriarch's financial distress, seizing an opportune moment for attaining his desire by relieving the Hierarch's need, he sent a letter to the Blessed John that read as follows: "Upon learning of the deprivation that grips the munificent right hand of my Master, the Patriarch, I do not deem it meet that I should live in enjoyment and abundance whilst my Master is in financial distress. I have at my disposal fifty thousand bushels of corn and one hundred fifty pounds of gold.

4. "I beseech that I may give these, through you, to Christ, if only I might be judged worthy of being ordained by you to the Diaconate. For it has been said somewhere by the Apostle: '[T]here is made of necessity a change also of the law.'" (Hebrews 7:12).

St. John the Merciful

5. The Patriarch therefore summoned this man to meet with him in private, not wishing to shame him in front of many, and said to him: "My son, your offer is generous, and much needed at the present time, but it has a blemish and is, for this reason, unacceptable.

6. "For you are not unaware that sheep offered in accordance with the law, no matter how large they may have been, if they were not free of blemishes, were not accepted for sacrifice.** For the same reason, God did not accept the offerings of Cain (Genesis 4:5). With regard to 'a necessary change in the law,' we know that the Apostle said this about the old law [i.e., Old Testamental law—*Trans.*], and it is quite different in meaning. What do you think of the following text from James, the Brother of God: '[W]hosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all' (St. James 2:10)? As for our brethren, the poor, even if we ourselves were devoid of resources, God, Who has fed them to this day, will also provide for them henceforth, as long as we keep His commandments unaltered.

7. "For how could it be impossible or difficult for Him Who once multiplied the five loaves in the wilderness to bless the ten pecks in my granary and increase them to a large number? Hence, the statement made to Simon in the Acts of the Apostles applies to you, my son: 'Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter'" (Acts 8:21).

8. The cleric was dismissed without having accomplished anything, and he had not yet reached his own house when it was announced to the great Patriarch that two of the Church's ships had put in to the harbor, conveying many thousands of bushels of corn from Sicily. On hearing this news, the Saint fell on his knees and gave thanks to God, saying: "Those who seek Thee, O Lord, and keep Thy commandments shall not be deprived of any good thing.*** Wherefore, I magnify Thine All-Holy Name, because Thou hast not allowed Thy servant to sell Thy Grace for money."

9. The renowned Patriarch was thus relieved from distress, because he did not violate the exactitude of the Canons for the sake of satisfying material needs.

B. From St. Ephraim

1. Brother, always be vigilant and attentive to yourself and do not show partiality to anyone to the detriment of your soul (*cf.* Ecclesiasticus 4:22), be he unimportant, important, or a ruler; for no one can rescue you from the unquenchable fire. Hear what Scripture says: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (St. Matthew 16:26).

2. Therefore, do not forfeit your boldness**** before God on account of human honor or glory, or on account of food, drink, clothing, or any other of life's necessities. For these things are all perishable, while the deeds of each man, whether good or bad, are recorded and abide forever, without being extinguished.

3. Think on heavenly things, not on earthly things, so that you might obtain what has been promised by our Father in Heaven and enjoy the glory of the Saints, who have been well-pleasing to Him.

* In Egypt, where the rains are sparse, farmers cultivating crops irrigate them from the Nile River when its waters rise and overflow their banks.

** "Whatsoever man shall offer a peace-offering to the Lord...or an offering of sheep, it shall be without blemish for acceptance; there shall be no blemish therein" (Leviticus 22:21).

*** "[T]hey that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good thing" (Psalm 33:11).

**** Reading "*παῤῥησίαν*" rather than "*δόξαν*," as in the present text (see *Ὁσίου Ἐφραὶμ τοῦ Σύρου Ἔργα*, ed. Konstantinos G. Frantzolas [Thessaloniki: Ekdoseis "To Periboli tes Panagias," 1989], Vol. II, p. 176)—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XXIV

That a believer, even if he falls into the tumult of secular life, should not conform to external circumstances, but should look to God and do what is pleasing to Him.

A. From the Life of St. Savvas

1. Our Holy Father Savvas visited Constantinople for a second time, following the decision of Peter, the then Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had asked him to intercede with the Emperor to relax his anger against the Christians of Palestine and release them from the punishments with which they had been threatened, after being slanderously blamed for the insurrection and secession of the Samaritans.

2. When Emperor Justinian was informed of Savvas' arrival in Constantinople, he prepared a most splendid welcome for him in his palace. Such was his respect for Savvas that, when he saw him entering the hall, he rose from his throne and with great piety kissed the sacred head of the ascetic. Then, seated beside the Emperor, Savvas explained to him the purpose of his journey. The Emperor readily granted the Saint's petitions, but his eagerness to thank him did not stop at this; on the contrary, he considered it a very serious loss if he were not able to benefit the Saint in a manner appropriate for royalty and with great generosity; and, indeed, this thought preoccupied him intensely. Among the gifts that he decided to offer to the Saint was the guarantee of a steady income for his monks. The Emperor made his thoughts known to the Saint and pleaded with him to accept his offer.

3. The Saint replied to the Emperor: "He Who of old abundantly nourished the disobedient people in the wilderness, made water gush from a rock,* and provided them not only with what they needed, but also frequently with more than they needed, will provide us with sufficient income and money for our needs.

4. "If you are so concerned to please us, O Emperor, there are other ways in which you can show your generosity towards us; these are nei-

ther insignificant nor trifling, and would in fact benefit the general public. We request that you exempt the inhabitants of Palestine from paying taxes for a certain period of time, for they have suffered terrible hardships from the Samaritans; that you establish a hospice in Jerusalem for the accommodation of those who come to the Holy City to venerate the Life-giving Sepulchre; that you put an end to the heresies that continue to vex the Churches; and finally, that you construct strongholds in our monasteries, in which the monks can take refuge during enemy attacks."

5. Such were the requests that the Divine Savvas submitted to the Emperor. When the Emperor heard them, as if possessed of a raging thirst to grant favors to the Saint, he at once began writing letters, issuing instructions, sending decrees in all directions, and, in short, doing everything possible to ensure that there would be no delays in carrying out his wishes, fearing lest his ardor be dampened by sluggishness in bringing such splendid boons to fruition.

6. The Emperor occupied himself with the Saint's requests, aided by Tribonian the Quæstor,** in the hall known as Magnaura.*** Savvas sat beside them, participating in their consultation and suggesting how his requests might best be fulfilled. But when it was the third hour,**** he took leave of the Emperor and went to offer his customary prayers to God in private, devoting himself to reciting the Psalms of David.

7. Jeremiah, one of his disciples, then came up to him and asked him: "Father, when the Emperor is making such efforts and laboring so ardently to fulfill your requests, why have you abandoned him and why do you now tarry elsewhere?"

8. Savvas replied very frankly: "There is nothing untoward in this, my son, for the Emperor is doing his duty and we are doing ours." Thus, material need could never induce St. Savvas to stoop to ignoble flattery or servility; on the contrary, he behaved with proper moderation towards everyone and his speech was adorned with dignity and prudence.

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Amma Theodora was asked: "How is it possible for one to live in

the midst of worldly tumult, hear worldly conversations, and still have his mind fixed on God?" "Just as when you are sitting at a table on which there are many foods" she replied, "and you partake of them, though without relish, and are not condemned for this, so also if, out of necessity, worldly conversations enter into your ears, keep your heart turned towards God and do not forget Him. If you hear worldly conversations with this attitude, that is, without taking pleasure in them, you will not come to any great harm."

2. An Elder said: "Wherever the bee goes, it makes honey; and wherever the monk finds himself, he ought to do the work of God."

3. Abba Poimen said: "Abba Sisoes used to tell us: 'There is a shame associated with the sin of not fearing God.'***** For when a man, in order to receive glory from men, does not do what is good—since, as a man-pleaser, he is ashamed to do good before men—then he brings upon himself the accusation of not fearing God."•

4. An Elder said: "Wherever you go, be attentive to yourself at all times, remembering that 'the house of the heron is chief among them' (Psalm 103:17). In other words, the monk is similar to a heron, because he is not encumbered by possessions and loves solitude;•• wherever he goes, he has a dwelling already prepared, because every place is his dwelling. Be zealous, then, wherever you happen to be, to fulfill your prayer rule and not to neglect the appointed prayers. Pay attention as much as possible to the meaning of the prayers and keep before your eyes every kind of affliction, which will bring you understanding should you stumble. These things cannot be accomplished without great attentiveness and toil."

* "And the Lord said to Moses, 'Go before this people, and take to thyself of the elders of the people, and the rod with which thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and thou shalt go. Behold, I stand there before thou come, on the rock in Choreb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and water shall come out from it, and the people shall drink'" (Exodus 17:5-6).

** The *Quæstor sacri palatii*, head of the *consistorium* (imperial council) and minister of justice in the East Roman Empire (Byzantium)—somewhat comparable to the Lord Chancellor in late medieval England. Tribonian, a prominent member of St. Justinian's court and an outstanding jurist, aided the Emperor in compiling the monumental *Corpus Juris Civilis* (Cyril of Scythopolis, *Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, p. 217, n. 104)—*Trans.*

*** The great hall of Magnaura was the place in the Byzantine imperial palace where foreign ambassadors were received. It is also associated with the University of Con-

stantinople, which, founded in 425, was acknowledged in the Middle Ages to be the oldest university in the world. Constantinople was, in medieval times, the spiritual and cultural center of Christendom. The university's influence waned after 1204, with the Latin captivity of Constantinople, and it ceased to operate in the fifteenth century, following the Turkish conquest of the Byzantine Empire—*Editors.*

**** Probably the third hour of the night, three hours after sunset.

***** *Cf.* Abba Sisoes, §41: "Shame and lack of fear often lead to sin" (*Patrologia Græca,* Vol. LXV, col. 405A)—*Trans.*

• "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Ephesians 6:6-7).

•• In a homily on Psalm 103, ascribed to St. John Chrysostomos, it is stated that according to "one of the Fathers," "every place is suitable for the heron to inhabit, and wherever the heron goes, it finds, as it were, a house prepared for it" (*Patrologia Græca,* Vol. LV, col. 649)—*Editors.*

Hypothesis XXV

He who seeks to please God must reckon as nothing the dishonors or honors that come from men.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. A brother visited St. Makarios the Egyptian and said to him: "Abba, tell me how I can be saved.""Go to the graves," replied the Elder, "and insult the dead."

2. The brother therefore went to the cemetery, insulted the dead, and threw stones at the graves. When he returned to the Elder, he reported to him what he had done. "Did they not say anything to you?" the Elder asked. "No," replied the brother. "Go back there again tomorrow," the Elder told him, "and praise them."

3. So the brother went back to the cemetery and praised the dead, calling them Apostles, Saints, and Righteous Ones. He then returned to Abba Makarios and said: "I praised them." "Did they not offer you any reply?" he asked. "None whatsoever," said the brother. The Elder then said to him: "Do you see how much you offended them, yet they did not respond, and how much you praised them, yet they remained silent? Do the same, if you wish to be saved. Become as one dead and regard neither the dishonor of men nor their honor, as did the dead whom you visited. Only then can you be saved."

4. Amma (Eldress) Sarah said: "If I were to pray to God that all men might approve of me, I would find myself at each one's door, repenting. I would pray, rather, that my heart might remain pure towards all, having neither ill thoughts nor judgment regarding anyone."

5. An Elder said: "Do not desire that other men not despise you."

6. The same Elder said: "Woe to that man whose reputation is greater than his deeds."

7. Abba Anthony said: "There will come a time when men will be mad. If they see someone who is not mad, they will rise up against him and will say, 'You are mad,' because he does not resemble them in their madness. But he that is striving for piety and virtue should pay no attention whatsoever to these men."

B. From St. Ephraim

1. Brethren, if it ever happens that we are reproached for a good deed that we have performed, let us not be ashamed over a reproach unjustly brought against us by men—or do what we ought not to do, in order to elicit their praise. For it is written: "My people, in whose heart is My Law: fear not the reproach of men, and be not overcome by their contempt. For as a garment will be devoured by time, and as wool will be devoured by a moth [so shall they be consumed]; but My righteousness shall be forever, and My salvation for all generations" (Isaiah 51:7-8). Elsewhere it says: "I do not disobey nor dispute. I gave My back to scourges, and My cheeks to blows; and I turned not away My face from the shame of spitting, and the Lord God became My helper; therefore, I was not ashamed, but I set My face as a solid rock, and I know that I shall never be ashamed" (Isaiah 50:5-7).

2. Wherefore, brethren, if we are insulted, or derided, or suffer some other evil from men because we do what is good, let us neither be faint-hearted nor forsake the straight path, in accordance with the Prophet, who says: "Though an host should array itself against me, my heart shall not fear" (Psalm 26:3); and again: "The proud have transgressed exceedingly, yet I have not declined from Thy law" (Psalm 118:51), and "For Thy sake I have suffered reproach; shame hath covered my face" (Psalm 68:8). The Savior also says: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you" (St. Matthew 5:11).

3. Let us, therefore, not be ashamed, my beloved, to be called hypocrites by those who violate the Lord's commandments; for it is clear that it is not for the sake of correcting us that they characterize us as hypocrites, but in order that we might lose our moral bearings and become as they are: shameless, impudent, and strangers to piety and every other virtue, for they call pious people hypocrites.

4. Let us not be ashamed of their reproaches, and let us not adopt

their foolishness, since, according to Scripture, "[D]eath befalleth the uninstructed" (Proverbs 24:8). Elsewhere, it is said: "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (I St. John 3:21). And again: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; but let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief.... Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I St. Peter 4:14-16), and "[I]f the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I St. Peter 4:18).

5. Let us, therefore, avoid familiarity and laughter, for these destroy the soul of a monk, as Scripture says: "Blessed is the man that out of piety always feareth [lest he sin]" (Proverbs 28:14). Let us avoid buffoonish and careless men, for "[W]hat part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?" (II Corinthians 6:14-15).

C. From St. Mark

He who truly repents is mocked by the iniquitous, and this is proof that he is well-pleasing to God.

D. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba John the Short said to his disciple: "My child, let us honor the One and all shall honor us; but if we despise the One, Who is God, all shall despise us, and then we will go to perdition."

2. Abba Matoes used to say of Abba Tithoes: "No man can speak against him in any matter; for just as an exact balance is used to weigh pure gold, so also Abba Tithoes hears and speaks only of those things that have worth."

Hypothesis XXVI

That one must strive for virtue in secret, without display or boasting; and concerning vainglory and pleasing men, and whence vainglory is engendered, what evils it brings about, and how it is destroyed.

A. From the Life of St. Synkletike

1. The Blessed Synkletike said to her assembled nuns: "We would truly be vouchsafed great spiritual goods, if we were to endure as many hardships in our search for the genuine currency of the commandments as those experienced by individuals who tediously and vainly pursue the vanities of this world.

2. "For they suffer shipwrecks; they encounter pirates; they fall into the hands of brigands; and, in short, they endure countless other calamities, and oftentimes, when they do make a profit, they call themselves paupers—so as not to arouse envy—and conceal their gains.

3. "We, however, not only do not brave such perils for the sake of what is truly profitable, but if we suffer even a little hardship and succeed in accomplishing some good, we exalt ourselves and flaunt that good before men, even embellishing it; thereupon, through our ostentation, we dissipate it.

4. "Worldly people, even if they gain many things, desire to acquire yet more; but we, content with those few virtues that we possess as if they were something great, are not eager to labor in order to attain greater heights.

5. "We must, therefore, 'reach forth unto those things which are before' (Philippians 3:13) and yearn for higher things, putting forth every effort to conceal our spiritual gains. For just as treasure, when it is revealed, is plundered and thereby diminished, so also virtue, when it is made known and broadcast, is destroyed.

6. "Let those who would set forth their virtues endeavor also to de-

clare their shortcomings; if they conceal these, so as not to suffer reproaches, they should beware of revealing their virtues, lest the latter be destroyed by being divulged to men.

7. "Those who live virtuously declare their small sins and also their omissions, in order to avoid the glory that comes from men; and they conceal their virtues in order to safeguard their souls, lest they receive praise from men, when their virtues are discovered, and lose their zeal by becoming conceited.

8. "For just 'as wax melteth before fire' (Psalm 67:3), so also the soul is paralyzed by praise and loses its vigor.

9. "If we live in a *cœnobion,* let us prefer obedience to ascesis; for the latter can engender in us arrogance, whereas obedience endows us with humility."

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba John the Short was once sitting in Church and sighing with compunction, not realizing that there was somebody else behind him. Upon turning around and seeing him, he made a prostration and said: "Forgive me, Abba, I have not yet learned the rudiments of monastic conduct."*

2. Abba Joseph of Pelousion related the following story: "When I was living in Sinai, there was a brother there who was a strict ascetic; he was also handsome in physical appearance and athletic. He used to come to the *Synaxis*** of the brethren wearing a much-patched and short old *maphorion.****

3. "Seeing him constantly coming to the *Synaxis* in this attire, I said to him one day: 'Brother, do you not see how the brethren come to the *Synaxis* like the Angels of God? So why do you always come here looking like this?' 'Forgive me, Abba. I have nothing else to wear,' he replied. After the *Synaxis,* I took him to my cell and gave him a *lebiton****** and whatever else he needed. Thenceforth, he wore the same clothing as the other brothers, and he looked like an Angel of God.

4. "On one occasion, it was necessary for the Fathers of the skete to

St. John the Short

send ten brethren to the Emperor on some business, and they voted to include the brother in question among those who were to be sent on this deputation. When he found out that he had been selected, he made a prostration to the Fathers and said to them: 'Forgive me, for the Lord's sake, for I am the slave of a certain grandee there, who, if he should recognize me, will oblige me to put off the monastic *schema* and become his slave once more.'

5. "After hearing this entreaty, the Fathers excused him. Later on, they learned from someone who knew this brother very well that when he was in the world he had been the Praetorian Prefect.***** He used this story as a pretext to avoid going on the deputation, lest he be recognized and bothered by people who knew him. In this manner, the Fathers eschewed the glory and comfort of this world."

6. An Elder said: "Either avoid men by fleeing from them, or mock the world and men by playing the fool."

C. From St. Ephraim

1. My brother, if you renounce the world and go far away from your homeland and your kinsfolk, and the Lord God settles you in a place in which you are going to serve Him, do not seek to make a name for yourself in that place, even if you were a ruler and very important in your own country, but say to your mind and to other men what the Prophet said—"I am poor and needy" (Psalm 85:1)—and God will help you and exalt you.

2. O monk, do not make a show of outward piety, while being indifferent in your cell, lest you be likened to the "whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of [dead] men's bones, and of...uncleanness" (St. Matthew 23:27); for in every place God is one and the same, and if you do what you do while keeping your eyes fixed on Him, you will never sin.

3. A house built on sand (*cf.* St. Matthew 7:26) will not stand; and ascesis mingled with the desire to please men will not last. He who does his work with the fear of God will not lose his reward. For how long will the earth hide the seed sown in it? Assuredly, as soon as it receives the scent of water, it will then bring forth what has been sown in it in

abundance and with beauty.

4. Therefore, my beloved, fulfill the commandments of God in secret, and He will reward you openly and splendidly (St. Matthew 6:6). If you appear pure as gold in the eyes of your brothers, regard yourself as a useless vessel, and you will avoid pride, which is hateful to God and men.

5. Beware, my beloved, lest in yearning for greater honor you bring dishonor upon yourself; in truth, it is an honor for a man to do everything that is in accordance with God's Will, but great dishonor to transgress His commandments.

D. From Abba Isaiah

1. If you are engaged in a certain ascetic practice, subjecting yourself to physical hardship for the sake of God, and people admire you and honor you for it, abandon this practice and embark upon another, lest your toil come to naught.

2. If you have avoided vainglory, pay no attention to other people, knowing that God agrees with what you are doing.

3. Like a house that has neither doors nor windows, and into which any sort of reptile can thus enter, so is the man who performs his ascetic work and does not conceal it.

4. Just as rust corrodes iron, so human honor corrodes the heart, if the heart gives it credence.

5. Just as a bramblebush, when it becomes entangled in a vine, destroys the vine's fruit, so vainglory destroys the spiritual fruit of a monk, if he is carried away by it.

6. I consider it a great and honorable thing to overcome vainglory and to progress in the knowledge of God. For he who falls into the shame of the dreadful passion of vainglory is deprived of peace and hardens his heart towards the Saints. Envy takes up its abode in him, he is slain by the demons, and the end result of these evils is that he falls into ungodly haughtiness.

7. As for you, O faithful Christian, keep your ascetic labors secret and take care, lest your tongue steal what your heart has toiled to acquire and hand it over to your enemies. If you wish your sins to be covered by the Lord (Psalm 31:1), do not display your virtues to men; for what we do with our virtues, God does with our sins.•

8. Having concealed your virtue, do not gloat as if you are doing what is righteous; for righteousness consists not only in concealing one's good deeds, but also in not entertaining any forbidden thoughts.

9. Safeguard your speech from bragging and your mind from self-conceit, lest God abandon you and you fall into the opposite of what you boast about having achieved; for the good is accomplished not only by man, but also by the aid of God, Who sees all things.••

E. From St. Isaac

1. A dog that licks a rasp drinks its own blood, and because of the sweetness of the blood it does not realize the harm that it suffers therefrom.

2. Likewise, the monk who imbibes vainglory consumes his own life and does not realize that he is harmed by the transient sweetness of this passion.

3. Worldly glory is a reef, covered on all sides by water, of which the sailor passing over it is unaware until his ship dashes against it. On account of the fissure created by this collision, the ship is filled with water and sinks.

4. So also vainglory does not cease from inundating the soul of him who dashes against it with the bitter and turbulent waters of worldly vanity, until it drowns and destroys him.

5. The Fathers say that, because of vainglory, passions once conquered through long years of ascesis are quickly restored and renewed in the soul.

F. From Abba Cassian

1. The passion of vainglory has many forms and is very subtle, and for this reason even he who is being tempted by it does not immediately detect it; for the assaults of the other passions occur more openly, and it is easier to fight against them, since the soul recognizes the Enemy and immediately puts him to flight through rebuttal and prayer.

2. The vice of vainglory, since it assumes many forms, as we have said, is difficult to struggle against, since it is present in every facet of our life: in our attire, in our speech, in our words, in our deeds, in vigils, in fasts, in prayer, in reading, in silence, in forbearance. Through all of these, it endeavors to shoot down the soldier of Christ.

3. Whomsoever it cannot entice into vainglory through extravagant apparel it tries to tempt with shabby clothing; whomsoever it is unable to puff up through honor it inflates with arrogance, by making him think that he is enduring dishonor; whomsoever it cannot tempt to vainglory through a display of erudition and eloquence it lures, with the bait of silence, into fancying himself to be a Hesychast; and whomsoever it is unable to enervate with sumptuous foods it induces to seek praise through fasting. To put it simply, every task, every pursuit, affords this evil demon a pretext for warfare; in addition to this, it even suggests that we imagine ourselves worthy of becoming clergymen.

4. I remember a certain Elder, when I was staying in Sketis, going to the cell of a brother in order to pay him a visit. As the Elder approached the door of his cell, he heard the brother talking inside; and so, supposing that the latter was studying the Scriptures, he stood outside listening. He then realized that the brother in question, driven out of his mind by vainglory, had ordained himself a Deacon and was dismissing the Catechumens!

5. When the Elder heard this, he pushed the door open and entered. After welcoming him, the brother made the customary prostration to him and asked whether he had been standing at the door for a long time. The Elder replied to him: "I had just arrived when you were giving the dismissal." Blushing out of embarrassment and filled with compunction, the brother fell at the Elder's feet, beseeching him to pray for him, that he be delivered from such delusion.

6. I have mentioned this incident because I wanted to show to what

a pitch of stupidity the demon of vainglory can lead a man. Thus, he who wishes to be a perfect athlete and win the crown of righteousness should strive in every way to overcome this polymorphous beast, always keeping in mind the words of the Prophet: "God hath scattered the bones of them that please men" (Psalm 52:6). Let him do nothing with a view to receiving praise from men, but let him seek only the reward that comes from God, always rejecting the thoughts of self-praise that invade his heart; and let him account himself as nothing before God, for in this way it will be possible, with God's help, for him to be delivered from the spirit of vainglory.

G. From St. Maximos

1. When you overcome any of the more ignominious passions, such as gluttony, fornication, anger, or covetousness, the thought of vainglory immediately lights upon you; and if you overcome this, the thought of pride attacks you in quick succession.••• All of the ignominious passions of the soul drive away the *thought* of vainglory; but once the aforementioned passions have been defeated, they unleash vainglory on the soul.

2. When you see Herod and Pilate reconciling with each other in order to do away with Christ,•••• you may understand this as the concurrence of the demon of fornication and the demon of vainglory, who come to agreement with one another for the purpose of slaying the principle of virtue and knowledge.•••••

3. For the demon of vainglory, feigning spiritual knowledge, sends one to the demon of fornication, while the demon of fornication, hypocritically affecting purity, sends one back, again, to the demon of vainglory.† Hence, the Gospel says: "Herod arrayed [Jesus] in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate" (St. Luke 23:11).††

4. Hidden spiritual work destroys vainglory, while ascribing one's accomplishments to God destroys pride. He who pursues virtues out of vainglory clearly pursues knowledge, too, out of vainglory. Clearly, such a man neither does nor says anything for the edification of others, but is in all circumstances angling for glory from those who see or listen to him. His passion is exposed when any of the aforementioned people censure his deeds or his words, and for this reason he is sorely

distressed, not because he has not edified them (for such was not his purpose), but because he has been humiliated.

5. Vainglory and avarice engender one another; for the vainglorious become wealthy, while the wealthy become vainglorious.††† This is how it is with worldly people. But a monk, being without possessions, is more prone to vainglory; if he does have money, he hides it out of shame, as something unbecoming his monastic *schema*.

6. It is characteristic of the vainglory of a monk that he becomes vain about his virtue and whatever follows from this; it is characteristic of his pride that he becomes elated over his spiritual attainments and disdains others and that he ascribes these attainments to himself, and not to God.

7. It is characteristic of the vainglory and pride of a worldly person that he becomes puffed up and vain about beauty, wealth, power, and secular wisdom.

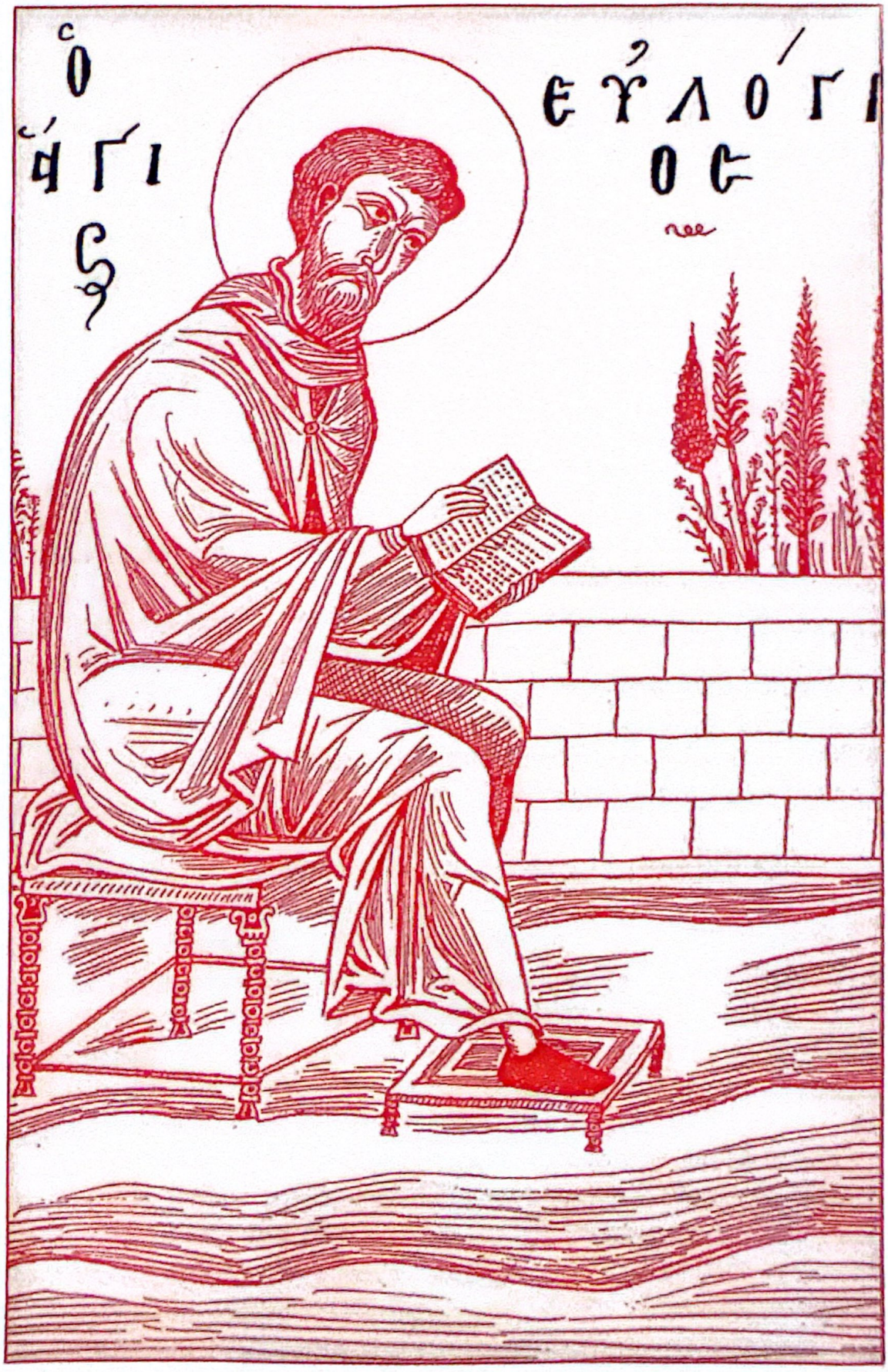
8. It is no small struggle to be delivered from vainglory. One is delivered from it by performing his spiritual work in secret and by more frequent prayer. A sign that one has been delivered from vainglory is that he no longer harbors resentment against one who has spoken or continues to speak ill of him.

H. From the *Gerontikon*

1. It was said of Abba Arsenios and Abba Theodore of Pherme, that they abhorred the glory of men more than anything else. For this reason, whereas Abba Arsenios would not readily meet anyone, Abba Theodore did not avoid meeting others—but when he did so, his speech was as sharp as a sword.

2. Once upon a time, there lived a great ascetic named Evlogios, who was also a Priest. He used to fast for two days in a row, or even pass a whole week eating nothing at all. And when he relaxed his fast, he would eat nothing but bread and salt. People would praise Evlogios for his asceticism.

3. One day, Evlogios visited Abba Joseph in Panepho, expecting to encounter stricter asceticism in his company. Abba Joseph received him



St. Evlogios

gladly and commanded his disciple to prepare a meal from what they had, in honor of the guests. When they sat down to eat, the disciples who were accompanying Evlogios said to Abba Joseph: "The Priest eats only bread and salt." Abba Joseph gave no response to this remark, but continued eating in silence.

4. Evlogios and his disciples stayed for three days, during which time he heard neither Abba Joseph nor any of his disciples chanting or praying aloud (this was because Abba Joseph and his disciples carried out their spiritual work in secret). They departed without having derived any benefit from their visit.

5. By Divine Providence it became dark, such that Evlogios and his disciples, in the course of wandering about in the desert, ended up again at Abba Joseph's dwelling. Before knocking on the door, they heard him inside chanting with his disciples. Having waited for quite some time—since the others had not yet finished their psalmody—they knocked. As soon as Abba Joseph's monks heard the knocking, they immediately stopped their chanting and opened the door, receiving the guests with joy.

6. On account of the heat, Evlogios was thirsty, and so one of Abba Joseph's disciples poured water into an earthen jar and offered it to him. But it contained a mixture of salt water and fresh water, and thus, when Evlogios tasted it, he could not drink it. Coming to himself, he fell on his knees before Abba Joseph and said to him: "What is this all about, Abba? When we were together you did not chant at all, whereas after we left you engaged in psalmody for some time. Likewise, when we sat down at the table to eat, you drank wine; now, however, having tasted your water, I find that it contains salt and is practically undrinkable."

7. Abba Joseph replied: "The brother who brought you water is a little simple-minded; he mixed it with sea water by mistake." But Evlogios besought the Elder to tell him the truth. Abba Joseph then said: "That small cup of wine that we served with the meal was for the sake of love. The brothers usually drink only this salt water." He also explained, with regard to the psalmody, that when they had visitors they did their spiritual work in secret, out of discretion, so as to avoid vainglory (whereas, when they were alone they were able to do it openly).

8. Thus did Abba Joseph teach Evlogios to be accommodating and discerning. Excising from him every inclination to do things in order to elicit human praise, he persuaded Evlogios, too, to perform his ascetic work thenceforth in secret. Greatly edified, Evlogios said to Elder Joseph: "This work that you do is indeed the genuine work of monastics."

9. One of the Fathers related the following story concerning Abba Theodore of Pherme: "I once went in the afternoon to visit him. It was summer, and I found him wearing a *lebiton* so torn that his chest was bare; as well, he was not wearing his *koukoulion;* it was lying in front of him. While we were conversing, a certain officer from the city came to see him. When he knocked on the door, the Elder went to open it. After welcoming the visitor, he bade him sit down at the doorway and began to talk with him. I took part of his *maphorion* and covered his shoulders with it, but the Elder grabbed it with his hand and threw it on the floor.

10. "When the officer had left, I said to the Elder: 'Why, Abba, did you do this? Did this man come to be edified or, rather, to be harmed?' The Elder replied: 'What are you saying to me, Abba? Are we still to be slaves to men? We did what we had to do, and he departed. Whoever desires to be edified, let him be edified; and whoever seeks an occasion for scandal, let him be scandalized. As for me, in whatever state I find myself, that is how I will receive my visitors.'"

11. He also gave the following instructions to his disciple: "If anyone comes, wishing to see me, do not tell him what he, as a man, wants to hear—in other words, do not lie for the sake of pleasing him. Instead, if I am eating, tell the person who has come, 'The Elder is eating,' and if I am sleeping, tell him, 'The Elder is sleeping.'"

Such was the extraordinary extent to which Elder Theodore detested human glory. As for us, even if we are unable, on account of our weakness, to emulate in full this amazing spiritual work of the Elder and to trample upon the inclination to please others, let us at least abhor it whenever it pollutes our conscience, and let us not become enemies of God for the sake of pleasing men.

12. A certain brother asked the same Abba Theodore: "Will you allow me, Abba, not to eat bread for a few days?" The Elder responded, "You do well, for I have done the same myself." The brother then said, "I would like to take my chickpeas to the bakery and make flour out of

them." The Elder replied: "If you are going to the bakery, you might as well make your bread. So what, then, was the point of all this display?"

13. A brother asked Abba Motios: "If I leave to dwell in another place, how do you want me to conduct my life there?"†††† "Wherever you dwell," answered the Elder, "do not seek to make a name for yourself, by saying, for example, 'I do not go to the *Synaxis*,' or 'I do not eat at the *agape* meal'; for statements like these create an empty reputation, and later on you will be bothered by visitors. Wherever men find such austerity, they run to that place.

14. "Therefore, wherever you dwell, live as the others do, so as to appear equal to them. If you see the more devout among the Fathers whom you trust doing something, do as they do and you will be at peace. For you gain two benefits from living in the same way as everyone else: you acquire humility and you avoid attracting praise from men or being bothered by them."

15. Abba Nisthero the Great was once walking in the desert with a brother, when they saw a large snake and fled. The brother said to the Elder: "Were you also scared, Father?" "I was not afraid," answered the Elder, "but it is a good thing for me that I fled, since thus I did not have to flee from spirit of vainglory, that is, of pride."†††††

16. Abba Daniel related the following incident: "On one occasion, we visited Abba Poimen and ate together. When we got up from the table, Abba Poimen said to us: 'Brethren, go and rest a little now.' He went to his own cell, while the others who had come with me went to rest. I waited behind because I wished to converse with the Elder privately. So I started to make my way towards him; but when he saw me coming, he pretended to be asleep. For this was the Elder's practice: to do everything in secret."

17. Once Abba Adelphios, the Bishop of Helioupolis, visited Abba Sisoes, who was living on Abba Anthony's mountain. He stayed with the Elder for several days. When he was about to leave, Abba Sisoes prepared a meal for Abba Adelphios and his *synodeia*, even though it was morning and it was a fast day. So, when the table was ready, Abba Sisoes sat down and ate with them. No sooner had he begun to eat, than some of the brothers knocked on the door. Abba Sisoes then said to his

disciple: "Go get them a little porridge, because they are weary."

18. Abba Adelphios said to the Elder: "Let them wait outside for now, lest they should say that Abba Sisoes eats in the morning."‡ Abba Sisoes stared at him for a moment and said again to his disciple: "Go get them something to eat." When the brothers who had come saw the porridge, they asked the disciple who had brought it in: "Do you have guests?" "Yes," answered the disciple. "Is the Elder also eating with you?" "Yes," he repeated.

19. On hearing this, the brothers began to feel distressed, and they said: "May God forgive you for allowing the Elder to eat so early! Or are you unaware that because of this concession he will suffer immensely for many days?" [That is, Abba Sisoes, whenever he relaxed his ascetic regime, would afterwards fast with great strictness in private, in order to make amends for his leniency in the name of hospitality—*Editors.*] The Bishop also heard this conversation and immediately made a prostration to the Elder, saying: "Forgive me, Abba, for I was thinking on a human level, while you were performing that which God enjoins." Abba Sisoes replied to him: "If God does not glorify a man, the glory that comes from men is worth nothing. Let not the praise or the censure of men concern us."

20. It used to be said of the monks in Sketis that, if anyone became aware of their spiritual labors, they no longer regarded them as a virtue, but as a sin.

21. An Elder said: "The desire to please men destroys a man's inner ethos (namely, the disposition or habit of virtue),‡‡ and leaves him dry.‡‡‡

22. He also said: "He who reveals and broadcasts his good works is like one who sows seeds on the surface of the earth, and the birds of the air come and eat them. But he who conceals his manner of life is like one who sows seeds in the furrows of the earth; he will assuredly reap an abundant harvest."‡‡‡‡

* *Cf.* Abba Tithoes, §6 (*Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 428CD)—*Trans.*

** In the terminology of the desert Fathers, *Synaxis* generally denotes either a meeting of the Elders and monks or the Eucharist—*Trans.*

*** The "*maphorion*" or "*mophorion*" was a kind of cloak or cape, which was thrown

over the shoulders to shelter its wearer—*Trans.*

**** The *"lebiton"* was a type of *rason* (cassock) worn by monks when attending the Eucharistic service—*Trans.*

***** An official in charge of the civil administration of the Roman Empire. Praetorian prefects executed judicial powers as delegates of the Emperor, organized tax levies, and supervised provincial governors—*Editors.*

• Sections 7-9 are from St. Mark the Ascetic—*Editors.*

•• Abba Isaiah has marvellously distinguished between two forms of egotism: the one, which incites man to boasting—or "bragging," as he calls it—and the other, which has the form of inward self-complacency by way of assumed perfection: "self-conceit." (In this passage, we have restored the words "but also by the aid of God, Who sees all things," which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*, as found in the *Φιλοκαλία* [Athens: Ekdotikos Oikos "Aster," 1974], Vol. I, p. 122—*Editors*).

••• St. Maximos here distinguishes vainglory [*κενοδοξία—Trans.*] from pride [*ὑπερηφάνεια—Trans.*], and rightly so, because a man will first desire glory from men (vainglory) and thereafter will think that he stands on a higher level than others (pride).

•••• "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves" (St. Luke 23:12).

••••• Reading *"γνώσεως"* rather than *"γνῶσιν"* (see *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. II, p. 63)—*Trans.*

† A very helpful interpretation of this passage is provided in the modern Greek translation of this passage, which is unusually prolix but worthy of citation.

"The demon of vainglory, concealing himself under the supposed knowledge of lofty spiritual matters, implants in the soul an arrogant self-confidence and renders a man inadvertent, turning him, inadvertent and prideful, to the demon of fornication. In his turn, the demon of fornication, without immediately casting his soul into the mire of fornication, succeeds in instilling in such a man the pretense of purity, since, at least externally, he has preserved the hallmarks of self-restraint, although internally, in mind and intellect, he has fallen into shameful thoughts. Through this sham purity (sham in that he is filthy on the inside), he attracts the praise of men, and thus the demon of fornication returns his soul to the demon of vainglory. Such is the coöperation of the two demons, its aim being to destroy the principle of virtue in a man's soul, at which point he surrenders to sin without putting up a struggle" (Vol. III, p. 307)—*Editors.*

†† In this allegorical interpretation of the incident recorded in the Gospel, St. Maximos finds the following meaning: Pilate, as the representative of haughty Rome, and concerned only about external splendor, embodies the spirit of vainglory. Herod, by virtue of his illicit amours (he took Herodias, his brother's wife [St. Matthew 14:3] for his consort), embodies the spirit of fornication. These two men, "at enmity between themselves" (St. Luke 23:12), reconciled with each other on the eve of the iniquitous condemnation of Jesus. And what was Jesus? The embodiment of love. Thus, vainglory (Pilate) and fornication masquerading as purity (Herod) make peace for the purpose of eliminating the Spirit of Virtue (Jesus).

††† That is, the vainglorious become wealthy because they are able to inveigle their admirers into giving them money, while the wealthy become vainglorious because they receive praise from those who seek financial favors from them.

†††† I have here followed the reading "πῶς θέλεις διάξω" in preference to "θέλεις διδάξω" (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 300A)—*Trans.*

††††† This thought of the holy ascetic is imbued with compunctious humility and

with the example that Jesus gave when tempted in the desert: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His Angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (St. Matthew 4:6-7).

‡ That is, the Bishop recommended to the ascetic that he conceal his irregular behavior from the visiting brethren, so as not to be reproached, whereas the ascetic, to avoid hypocrisy, preferred to be censured rather than to enjoy the praise of men.

‡‡ "*Ποιότητα*," or, according to an alternative reading, "*πιότητα*," which in this context denotes sap or vitality. In this latter reading, the contrast with the aridity produced by the desire to elicit human praise emerges more clearly (see *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. II, p. 460 [chapter 8, §36])—*Trans.*

‡‡‡ That is, like unfertile ground in which nothing can grow.

‡‡‡‡ This comparison is based on the Parable of the Sower (St. Matthew 13:3-9; St. Mark 4:3-9; St. Luke 8:5-8).

Hypothesis XXVII

That we should not pursue friendships with people who are prominent in the world.

A. From the Life of St. Arsenios

1. The great Arsenios was not only much sought after by those near him, but was also a source of edification for many who came to his skete. In addition to this, not a few people who visited him from afar were greatly desirous both of seeing his face and of being regaled by his words.

2. Indeed, report of his virtue had spread everywhere and had filled the ears of all, and for this reason many Alexandrians went to him, including even Archbishop [Patriarch—*Trans.*] Theophilos himself, who considered it very important to visit the Elder. Disregarding the rigors of the journey, he arrived together with the Governor of the city and asked Arsenios for some edifying words.

3. Arsenios remained silent for a short while and then replied: "If I tell you something, will you agree to put it into practice?" They immediately gave their assent. "That by which I ask you to abide is that you never wish to go where you hear that Arsenios is." They were gladdened by what he told them, and not distressed, for in these words they discerned his love for silence and his extreme humility.

4. However, when the Archbishop subsequently invited Arsenios to visit him in Alexandria and then inquired, through another person, whether Arsenios would open his door to him if he were to go to Sketis, the Elder replied: "If he comes, I will open my door to him; but if I open my door to him, it is obvious that I will have to open it to many others, too. In that case, only one course will remain for me: to withdraw far away from these parts." When the Archbishop heard this, he desisted from making any such request of the Elder.

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. In the region where Abba Or dwelled, there lived a count named Longinos, who performed many acts of charity. While visiting one of the Fathers, he besought him to guide him to Abba Or. The monk therefore went to the Elder and began to praise Count Longinos, saying that he was a good man and that he gave many alms. The Elder, perceiving the purpose of these laudations, replied: "Yes, he is a good man." So the monk began to entreat him, saying: "Allow him, Abba, to come and see you." The Elder said in reply: "It is impossible for him to cross this ravine, and so he will not see me."

2. An Egyptian monk was living in a suburb of Constantinople during the reign of Emperor Theodosios the Younger. One day, the Emperor was crossing the street where the monk lived. Leaving his entourage and going on alone, he stood before the monk's door and knocked. When the monk opened the door, he recognized who his visitor was, but received him as if he were just one of the palace guards and without any particular attentiveness.

3. After the Emperor had entered, the Elder offered the customary prayer and they sat down. "How are the Fathers in Egypt faring?" asked the Emperor. "They are all praying for your salvation," replied the Elder. While they were talking, the Elder stood up and moistened a few rusks, put a little oil and salt on them. Setting them before the Emperor, he said: "Eat a little." The Emperor ate what was put before him, and the Elder offered him water, which he drank. The Emperor asked him: "Do you know who I am?" "God knows who you are," replied the Elder. "I am the Emperor Theodosios." The Elder then paid proper homage to him.

4. The Emperor continued: "You monks are truly blessed, because you are not bothered by the cares of this life. In truth I tell you, Elder, that although I was born in the palace, I have never enjoyed bread and water as I have today, for I ate with great relish." Thereafter the Emperor began to honor him. But the Elder arose, departed from Constantinople, and returned to Egypt.

5. An Elder said: "Avoid making the acquaintance of one in authority, and do not visit him often; for from this familiarity, you will acquire boldness and will desire thenceforth to be in a position of authority yourself."

St. Or

C. From Isaiah the Anchorite

1. Abba Isaiah said: "Woe to us, for being born of poor and ignoble parents, we have forgotten who we are and, having promised to cherish poverty and dishonor, we vie with each other to be compared with the rich and notable. Woe to us, for when we encounter the rich and powerful, we strive to please them, but brush aside as bothersome the poor and those who approach us with requests for help."*

2. The magistrate of the region once heard about Abba Moses and went off to Sketis to see him. Some of the monks ran to the Elder and announced to him that the magistrate was coming. On hearing this, the Elder arose and fled to the marsh. While on the way there, he met the magistrate and his entourage, and they said to him: "Tell us, Elder, where is the cell of Moses?" "What do you want with him?" he asked them. "That man is a fool." When he heard this, the magistrate decided not to visit him.

3. After they arrived at the Church, he told the clergy: "Having heard all about Abba Moses, I came down to see him and, lo and behold, an Elder who was going to Egypt met us. We asked him where the cell of Abba Moses was, and he replied to us: 'What do you want with him? He is a fool.'" When they heard this, the clergy were upset, and they asked: "What did the Elder who made these adverse remarks against the Saint look like?" The magistrate answered: "He was an Elder wearing old clothes, tall and Black." "That was Moses," they told him. "He said these things to you because, meeting you, he wanted to pass by without your knowing it." The magistrate went away greatly edified.

4. A magistrate once came to see Abba Simon. When the latter heard of this, he put on his belt and went to prune a palm tree. The attendants of the magistrate came and saw him pruning the palm tree, and they shouted to him: "Elder, where is the anchorite?" "There is no anchorite here," he replied. On hearing this, they departed.

5. On another occasion, a different magistrate came to see him. The clergy went on ahead and told him: "Abba, get ready, because the magistrate has heard about you and is coming to receive a blessing from you." "Yes, I will get ready," he answered. He put on his old *rason* and,

taking bread and cheese in his hands, sat in his doorway eating. When the magistrate arrived with his retinue and saw him, they dismissed him with a disgusted glance, saying: "*This* is the anchorite about whom we have heard so much?" And they departed at once.

6. There was a certain Abbot** who enjoyed a great reputation among men (he was the spiritual Father of two hundred monks). Christ once visited his *cœnobion* in the guise of a poor Elder who was acquainted with the Abbot. Arriving early in the morning, He asked the gatekeeper to announce to the Abbot that such and such an acquaintance of his was there to see him. With some reluctance, the gatekeeper went into the monastery to inform the Abbot about Him. He found the Abbot conversing with some guests, and, after waiting for a little while, reported to him about the poor Elder. The Abbot angrily replied: "Do you not see that I am talking with these men? Now leave me alone."

7. The gatekeeper withdrew in trembling. He returned to the gatehouse and told the supposed poor Elder the reason why the Abbot could not receive Him. The long-suffering and forbearing Lord sat down in the gatehouse and remained there. At about the fifth hour,*** a rich man came to visit the monastery. The gatekeeper was prompt in showing deference to this man; he opened the gate for him and announced his arrival to the Abbot. The latter came forth with all haste and met the wealthy visitor at the gatehouse.

8. When God, Who is rich in mercy and the Friend of the lowly, saw the Abbot, He approached him in the guise of the poor Elder and pleaded with him, saying: "I wish to speak with you, Abba." But the Abbot, not deeming Him worthy of a reply, entered the monastery with the rich man, eager to prepare a repast for him. After the rich man had dined, the Abbot escorted him as far as the entrance, and then returned to the monastery, held captive by a multitude of cares and forgetting the request of the poor and forbearing Elder.****

9. By the time evening fell, when no one had invited that Blessed Stranger inside or paid any attention to Him, He again approached the gatekeeper and implored him to relate the following message to the Abbot: "If you desire the glory of men, because of your previous toil and your many ascetic endeavors, I will send people to visit you from the four points of the compass, since you desire to flatter and be flat-

tered; but of the goods of My Kingdom you shall not taste." From these words they realized that the poor Elder was Almighty God.

* Sections 2-9 are from the so-called alphabetical and anonymous collections of the *Apophthegmata Patrum—Trans.*

** Literally, Cœnobiarch.

*** Eleven o'clock in the morning.

**** *Cf.* St. James 2:1-4: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the goodly apparel, and say unto him, 'Sit thou here in a good place,' and say to the poor, 'Stand thou there,' or 'Sit here under my footstool,' are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?"

Hypothesis XXVIII

That we should not, on account of feelings of self-conceit, do more than the other brethren of the monastery.

A. From the Life of St. Evthymios

1. The great Evthymios thought it entirely unreasonable and harmful for certain of the brethren, and especially the younger ones, to make an open and public display of greater fasting than that observed by the others in the *cœnobion* or to set aside the common rule of the brethren by following the rule of their own self-will. Neither did he want goodness to be trumpeted, made manifest, or noised abroad; rather, he wanted it, as far as possible, to go unnoticed.

2. For this reason, he used to say that the best kind of abstinence is for us to eat, not to satiety, but so as still to feel the need for food; that is, to partake of as little food as we need. He also said that we should resist the passions of the flesh in secret and fence ourselves securely on all sides with the weapons of the virtues, which are: humility, temperance, study, discernment, and Godly obedience, a virtue whereby we truly imitate God.

B. From the Life of St. Pachomios

1. The Holy Pachomios took aside a certain brother, who was not behaving as befits a monk but following his own will, and admonished him with these words: "Brother, the Lord says, 'I came not down from Heaven to do Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me' (*cf.* St. John 5:30). You, too, should listen to us; for I see that the Enemy envies you and is endeavoring in every way possible to despoil your labors.

2. "Abide by the Rule of our *cœnobion*. When you are summoned to a common meal, do not abstain from eating, but go into the *trapeza* with the brothers and partake in moderation of the bread and the cooked food set before you. Neither eat to satiety when you feel physically ro-

bust nor allow your body to waste away through immoderate fasting when you feel exhausted. Rather, practice asceticism in accordance with your physical abilities, until you overcome the demon of boasting; for you are sorely vexed by him."

3. The brother listened to St. Pachomios, and was persuaded by his advice for the time being. After a little while, however, he again fell into delusion, saying to himself: "What is this? Where does it say in Scripture, 'Do not fast, do not practice asceticism'?" As he thus followed his own impulses, the Enemy gained possession of him.

4. The great Pachomios then summoned Theodore and said to him: "You know that I am sorely grieved by what is happening to this brother. Go and visit him, therefore, and find out what he is up to." Theodore went to the brother's cell, where he found him as if at prayer, but uttering incomprehensible words. When he returned, he informed Pachomios about the brother's babbling.

5. As Theodore pondered on the workings of the Devil and the variety of his warfare against us, he marvelled and became very frightened, reflecting with what great vigilance a monk must withstand the crafty assaults of his adversary. After the Saint had gone to the brother and prayed for him, the all-compassionate Lord healed him. Having come to his senses, the brother kept watch over himself thereafter, "reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Philippians 3:13).

6. Afterwards, Pachomios told the assembled brothers: "Great vigilance is required, brethren, if we are to be saved; indeed, I often hear the wicked demons boasting about how they deceive ascetics. Therefore, guard yourselves at all times and fortify yourselves by invoking the Name of Christ, since if we follow His will our enemies will be powerless against us. For they are but ash and smoke, and they cannot stand before those who fear the Lord."

7. It once happened that the great Pachomios was sitting in a certain spot in the monastery together with some of the senior brethren. One of the brothers who lived there had made two rush mats that day and was displaying them in front of his cell, opposite the place where the blessed one was sitting with the senior brothers. He did this, puffed up by the thought of vainglory, reckoning that the Saint would praise

him because, while the *Typikon* of the monastery required each brother to make one rush mat per day, he had produced twice that amount.

8. When the great Pachomios saw what had happened and realized that the brother had done it for show, he sighed heavily and said to those sitting with him: "Do you see this brother? Having worked from morning until now, and having bestowed all of his labor on the Devil, he has nothing left over from his work for the consolation of his soul; for he cherishes the glory of men more than the glory of God (*cf.* St. John 5:44). He has exhausted his body with toil and rendered his soul destitute of the spiritual enjoyment that comes from work."

9. And so, after summoning the brother, he rebuked him. He then ordered all the brethren of the monastery to come to him. When they had all assembled, he commanded that vainglorious monk to stand at the end of the line, holding his two mats, and to say: "I beseech you, brethren, pray for my wretched soul, that the all-compassionate God may have mercy on it by your prayers, since it preferred these two mats to His Kingdom."

10. After this, at the hour when the brothers were eating at the common table, he commanded him to stand in their midst with his mats, until the brothers rose from the table. Finally, he ordered him to be shut up alone in his cell, where he was to make two mats each day for a period of five months and eat only bread with salt. He also forbade the other brothers to have any contact with him.

C. From the *Gerontikon*

It was said of Abba Daniel that, when the barbarians invaded Sketis, the Fathers fled, but he remained behind, saying: "If God does not take care of me, then why am I living here?" And he passed through the midst of the barbarians without their seeing him. Then he said to himself: "Behold, God cares for me, and I am not dead. Therefore, you, too, must do what is human, and flee like the other Fathers."

D. From St. Ephraim

1. If you are living in a *cœnobion*, brother, do not deviate from the *Typikon* of the community or from the Apostolic rule;* for even errors

that appear minor cause no small harm. It is a good thing, therefore—indeed, a very good thing—not to be high-minded and not to earn condemnation for doing things out of self-love, but to carry out all of your duties just like the others and to join with like-minded brothers in common worship, vigil, manual work, and odd jobs, which is the greatest sign of humble-mindedness.

2. It is good, likewise, to be present at common meals, unless you are ill, and not to be controlled by your own will, that is, by vain conceit, but to follow the *Typikon* with all due reverence and with fear of God. Even if the tradition of the monastery is to eat twice a day, partake of the food with thanksgiving; and do yourself, with a clear conscience, whatever the more pious of the brethren do and you will make swift progress in the spiritual life by the Grace of the Lord.

3. If you are bothered by the thought that a lot of food has been set out on the table, bear in mind that it was not by your command that the food was prepared; if, on the other hand, the fare available in the monastery is poor and meagre, and your mind begins to be disgruntled at this, you should reflect that when the Lord of Glory became incarnate, He did not disdain to partake of barley loaves (St. John 6:9).

4. We must, therefore, confront the Enemy in every way and repulse his wiles through the power of the Cross. You should know that oftentimes the Enemy endows one of the brethren with great eagerness for ascesis, physical hardship, and a life of perfection. If the brother is humble-minded and denies his own will, he does not give any credence to such deceitful thoughts, but either drives them away at once, or confesses them to his superior and obeys the latter's exhortation and advice.

5. But if he is self-reliant** and self-satisfied, he conceals his passion and does not disclose it to anyone. Wishing to devote himself to ascesis,*** he departs from the *cœnobion*, separating himself from the brotherhood, supposedly in order to fulfill his desire for stricter asceticism, according to his own will, and thereby falls into complete perdition, being delivered into the hands of his enemies and coming under their control. For the foundation of his spiritual work is not built upon a rock,**** that is, on humility and unshakable faith, but on sand—on man-pleasing and pride. Hence, when shaken by rain, floods, and

winds, he falls into the destructive pit of despair.

6. Indeed, after such a monk has been separated from the brotherhood, the tempter assails him with such thoughts as these. He makes him imagine that he will spend a long time in ascesis and enjoy a long life, and says: "It is toilsome for you to abide in this austerity until the end of your life, for your body may eventually become exhausted and you will no longer be able to look after yourself." In this way the tempter gains control of him, gives him over to indifference, and hurls him headlong into despair, for God's help is withdrawn from him on account of his pride and self-satisfaction.

* "And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods..." (Acts 2:44-45); "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common..." (Acts 4:32-33).

** "*Ἰδιόρρυθμος.*" *Cf.* St. Mark the Ascetic: "For the self-reliant man, journeying without knowledge of the Gospels and without any guidance, often stumbles and falls into many pits and snares of the Evil One; he frequently goes astray and falls into many dangers, not knowing where he will end up. For many have gone through great ascetic labors and endured many toils and hardships for God's sake; but their self-reliance, their lack of discernment, and the supposition that they did not need any help from their neighbor rendered their many efforts worthless and vain" (*Letter to Nicholas the Solitary*, §5, *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. I, p. 131)—*Trans.*

*** Reading "ἐκδοῦναι τῇ ἀσκήσει βουλόμενος" rather than "ἐνδοῦναι τῆς ἀσκήσεως μὴ βουλόμενος" (see *Ὁσίου Ἐφραὶμ τοῦ Σύρου Ἔργα*, Vol. II, p. 319)—*Editors.*

**** "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock" (St. Matthew 7:24-25); "He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock" (St. Luke 6:48).

Hypothesis XXIX

That pride alone is sufficient to destroy a Christian, and that those who become puffed up over their accomplishments are abandoned by Divine Grace and suffer a deadly fall.

A. From Palladios

1. A certain Valens, who hailed from Palestine, arrived in the desert and stayed with us for a very long time. By virtue of the great hardship that he endured, he attained to the highest measure of ascesis but fell into pride, being so deluded by the demons that he thought Angels were conversing with him and ministering to his every need.

2. On one occasion, while he was weaving a basket in the evening, it became pitch dark and he lost the needle with which he was stitching the basket together. As his acquaintances relate, the Devil lit a lamp for him, so that he found his needle, and the poor wretch became puffed up with pride over this.

3. On another occasion, it happened that some strangers brought fruits to the brotherhood. The venerable Presbyter Makarios sent a handful to each of the cells, and likewise to the pitiful Valens. But Valens struck and insulted the one who brought it, saying: "Tell Makarios, 'I am not your inferior, that you should send me gifts.'"*

4. Realizing that Valens was in delusion, Makarios went to him several days later to plead with him, and said: "My brother Valens, you are being mocked by the demons. Stop listening to them and beseech God to deliver you from this snare." Valens paid no heed to his advice, but disobeyed and contradicted him. Therefore, when the Devil was assured that Valens was completely obedient to him, he disguised himself as the Savior and visited Valens by night in a vision, accompanied by a thousand torch-bearing demons holding** a fiery disc, in the middle of which was portrayed the form of the Savior. One of the demons that preceded him said to Valens: "Christ loves you for the purity and conduct of your life, and He has come to see you; go out of your cell, and

when you see Him standing in the distance, bow down and worship Him."

5. When Valens came out of his cell, he beheld this array of torch-bearing demons and the Antichrist (disguised as the Savior) about a *stadion* away. He fell down and worshipped him. Entranced by his vision, the wretched monk became so deranged that he entered the skete Church on the following day and said in front of everyone: "I have no need of Holy Communion, for today I have seen Christ."

6. The Fathers then took him and bound him with iron chains for a year. Destroying his conceit by their unceasing prayers for him, by the inactivity which they assigned to him, and by making him lead a more restricted life, they cured him. For "opposites are cured by opposites";*** for example, pride with disdain or insults.

7. One day, the blessed Deacons Evagrios and Albinos and I met together and went to visit the Holy Fathers Kronios, James, and Paphnoutios, seeking to learn from them the causes of the sins of certain brothers who had fallen from the monastic estate.

8. These veritable lamps of discernment expressed the following opinion: "All events are divided into two categories: those that occur according to God's good pleasure and those that occur by His permission. Thus, all that comes about in accordance with virtue and to the glory of God occurs according to His good pleasure; whatever is harmful or dangerous, or leads to lapses, occurs by His permission, as a result of irrationality or pride on the part of those who have been abandoned by Divine Grace. For it is impossible for one who holds to the right Faith and lives devoutly to be abandoned and to fall into shameful sins or demonic delusion.

9. "However, to those who pursue virtue with a perverted intention, with a view to pleasing men, or out of conceit, it happens that they fall into sins, for God abandons them to their corrupt purpose in order that, by perceiving the change that has come about in them from their degradation, they might correct themselves, either in their conduct or in their intention, since sometimes people sin in their conduct and at other times in their intention. For example, a profligate man may offer alms to a younger woman with immoral intentions, or then, again, one may offer

charity to the sick, the elderly, or those who have become paupers, but stingily or grudgingly; in the latter case, the intention is right, but the deed is not worthy of the intention, for we ought to give alms unsparingly and cheerfully."****

10. They also said this: "Many people are endowed with superior abilities: some are intellectually talented,***** others have an aptitude for asceticism. But when these abilities are not used for the sake of good itself or for a Godly purpose, then not only are they not beneficial, but they are actually harmful. He who becomes puffed up about the eloquence of his discourse no longer ascribes the gift of intelligence or the source of his knowledge to God, but attributes it to his own innate capacities or his ascetic efforts.•

11. "God, therefore, withdraws from such a man the Angel of Providence who is assigned to this gift, and the man, now bereft of Divine help, is caught in the clutches of the adversary. He who brags about his cleverness falls into licentiousness, so that his despicable or brutish behavior might drive out the demon of pride."

B. From the Life of St. Synkletike

1. The Blessed Synkletike said to her assembled nuns: "Each of us is threatened by a twofold fear: either of returning to our former life through faintheartedness in struggling against the Enemy, or of being tripped up while running in the arena of ascetical contests. For the Devil, our adversary, either draws us to himself from behind, when he sees that our souls are slack and sluggish, or, when he sees that they are zealous for ascesis, steals into them in a subtle and hidden manner and, through pride, destroys them totally.

2. "This is the Enemy's ultimate weapon, and it is more powerful than any of the others in his warfare against us. For it is through the very passion through which he was cast down from the Angelic ranks that he endeavors to destroy those who are stronger in virtue. For, just as the most skillful warriors, after using up their lighter missiles, produce—if their enemies still have the upper hand—their swords (their strongest weapons) last of all, so also the Devil, after expending all of his darts, finally uses a stronger weapon, the sword of pride, in order to destroy the one struggling against him.

St. Synkletike

3. "What are his initial weapons? Obviously, gluttony, voluptuousness, and fornication, through which he is wont to war against the young; these are followed by avarice, greed, and the like. When, by the Grace of God, the ascetic has overcome these, the crafty one, in desperation, then suggests the following thought to him, which makes him act with intemperate haughtiness towards his brothers: he fancies that he understands things unknown to most of them and that he surpasses the rest of them in fasting, vigils, and the other forms of ascesis, ascribing to himself a multitude of other ascetic feats.

4. "Moreover, the Devil blots out from his mind the memory of his sins and renders him totally oblivious of his own faults, so that he will henceforth be unable to say to God the salutary words, 'Against Thee only have I sinned, ...have mercy upon me' (Psalm 50:6,3). Just as the Devil said in his mind (when he decided to rebel against God), 'I will go up to Heaven; I will set my throne above the stars of Heaven; I will sit on a lofty mount, on the lofty mountains towards the north; I will go up above the clouds; I will be like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:13-14), so also he fills the mind of the prideful ascetic with fantasies about being in authority and occupying seats of honor (*cf.* St. Matthew 23:6) and about teaching others and working miracles of healing.

5. "The soul that is thus deceived is corrupted and destroyed, being smitten with a wound that is difficult to cure. What, then, ought we to do when such thoughts are present in our minds? We should meditate unceasingly on the following Divine words: 'I am a worm, and no man' (Psalm 21:7), and 'I am earth and ashes' (Genesis 18:27), and also on the saying of the Prophet Isaiah, that 'all our righteousness is as a filthy rag' (Isaiah 64:6), as well as others like these.

6. "If the nun who accepts these soul-corrupting thoughts is living by herself as a solitary, let her enter a *cœnobion* and be forced to eat twice a day, since she has been overcome by the passion of pride by reason of excessive asceticism. Let her peers rebuke and reproach her as doing nothing good, and let her perform every menial task.

7. "Let the lives of outstanding Saints be recounted to her, and let the sisters who dwell with her endeavor to intensify their asceticism, so that when she sees them, she might consider herself inferior to them. Let them constantly say to her: 'Why are you puffed up? Why are you high-

minded? Is it perhaps because you are not drinking wine? Yet others do not satiate themselves even with water. Is it because you do not eat olive oil or cooked food? Others do not so much as partake of bread, but assuage their bodily hunger with wild plants. Is it because you fast until the evening? Others fast continuously for two or three days. Are you proud because you do not bathe? Many worldly people, on account of bodily sickness, do not bathe at all.

8. "'Do you admire yourself because you sleep on a mat or on a rough mattress? Others constantly sleep on the ground. But even if you were to do this, it would be no great accomplishment. There are some who spread out stones underneath themselves so as not to derive any pleasure from bodily sleep; and there are others who suspend themselves from the ceiling for entire nights. But even if you were to practice all of these things and were to attain to the highest degree of asceticism, you should not be proud.

9. "'For the demons have done, and do, more than men; they neither eat, nor drink, nor do they need any external adornment; and they do not sleep at all. They even live in deserts—lest you should suppose that by inhabiting a cave you are doing something great.'•• By God's Grace it is possible for pride to be healed through such thoughts and actions; for just as a fire, when we blow on it forcefully, is dissipated and extinguished, so also virtue flies away when we become supercilious, even if the ascesis that engendered it was very fervent; and just as a sharp-edged••• knife is easily broken by a stone, so also intense asceticism is swiftly destroyed by prideful behavior.

10. "Hence, it behooves us to fortify the soul on all sides and to bring the strictest ascesis, when inflamed by the furnace of pride, down into shady places, and sometimes to curtail its excesses, so that the root might flourish more vigorously. For pride is the greatest of evils, as is evident from its contrary virtue, namely, humility, which is so great that, while the Devil can mimic all of the other virtues, he has absolutely no idea what humility is."

C. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Isidore said: "If you wish to practice asceticism in accordance with God's law, do not be conceited when you fast. If you are

haughty about the fact that you fast, what need is there for fasting? It is more profitable for a man to eat meat than to fast and become conceited and boastful about it."

2. The Elders used to say: "If you see a younger monk climbing up to Heaven by his own will, grab him by the foot and pull him down; for to do this is to his benefit."

3. Three brothers once visited a certain Elder in Sketis, and one of them said to him: "Abba, I have learned the Old and the New Testaments by heart." The Elder replied: "You have filled the air with words." The second brother said to him: "And I have copied the Old and New Testaments for my own use." "Then you have filled your cupboard drawers with sheets of paper," answered the Elder. The third brother said: "Weeds have sprouted in my fireplace." The Elder replied to him: "And you have driven hospitality away from your cell."••••

4. An Elder said: "Once, when I was living near another Elder, he was visited by a virgin, who said: "Father, I have fasted for two hundred weeks, eating only on Sundays, and I have recited both the Old and the New Testament. What else remains for me to do?" The Elder replied: "And what fruit have you reaped from all of this? Do you consider it an honor to be disparaged?" "No," she answered. "Do you reckon loss as gain? Or strangers as relatives according to the flesh? Or poverty as riches?" "Not at all," she replied. The Elder said: "Then you have not fasted for entire weeks, nor have you recited the Old and the New Testament—you are just deceiving yourself. Go away and work, for you have not achieved anything."

5. There was a monk in the Thebaid who lived a life of very strict asceticism: he applied himself to continuous vigils and prayers, exhibited perfect non-acquisitiveness, and was so devoted to fasting that he ate once a week—on Sunday, towards the evening—whatever legumes or wild plants were available to him, thereby assuaging the weakness of his nature. He lived this way for many years.

6. But the Devil, the author of evil, envious of his virtue, hastened to bring him down through the sin of pride, the very sin that had caused the Devil's own downfall. Thus, he suggested conceited thoughts to the monk, saying: "The asceticism that you are practicing is so strict that no

one else can attain to it. You must now perform miracles, so that you might become more zealous in your asceticism and might also edify men; for when they behold the wonders of God, they will glorify our Father Who is in Heaven. Let us, therefore, entreat Him to grant you the power to work miracles, for the Savior Himself said: 'Ask, and it shall be given you' (St. Matthew 7:7)." The ascetic listened to the Devil's advice and fervently besought God to grant him this power.

7. When God, Who loves mankind and Whose will it is that all men be saved (I St. Timothy 2:4), saw that the monk was deluded, He, mindful of monk's ascetic labors, did not allow him to be overcome by the Evil One. Thus, the thought occurred to the monk that the Apostle says: "[W]e are not sufficient of ourselves to reckon anything as coming from ourselves" (II Corinthians 3:5). He then reflected: "If such a man as the Apostle Paul said, 'I am not sufficient,' how much more am I in need of instruction! I will go to the anchorite, therefore, and whatever he tells me by way of counsel I will accept as guidance from God for my salvation."

8. The Abba to whom he was minded to go was great and renowned, advanced in spiritual vision, and capable of benefiting those who came to him. The ascetic left his cell and went to this anchorite. When he entered the Elder's cell, the latter saw two apes sitting on the monk's shoulders, one on the left and the other on the right, each of them holding a chain around his neck and pulling it towards himself. When he saw this spectacle, he realized that one of the apes was the demon of vainglory and the other the demon of pride,••••• for he was Divinely instructed in the discernment of spirits and thoughts. He sighed, therefore, and wept quietly, and after offering the customary prayer and giving each other the kiss of peace, the two of them sat down together for an hour, without saying anything. Such was the custom of the Fathers in that place.

9. The visiting monk then said: "Father, help me and give me advice as to how I may find the path to salvation." The Elder replied: "I am not capable of this, my child; for I myself need someone to lead me by the hand on this very path." "Do not refuse to help me, Reverend Father," said the monk, "for I have confidence in you and I have vowed to accept your advice." But the Elder again declined, saying: "You are not going to listen to me, and this is why I refuse to give you advice." The monk

persisted and assured him, saying: "Whatever you tell me, I will listen to you, as if you were an Angel."

10. The Elder then said to him: "Take the money in this purse, go to the city, and buy ten loaves of bread, ten pints of wine, and ten pounds of meat, and bring them here." The monk became very distressed when he heard this. However, he accepted the assignment and set off for the city. On the way, he turned over many thoughts in his mind, saying to himself in perplexity: "Why did the Elder decide to have me do this? And how am I going to buy these things? Lay people will be scandalized when they see me taking such items."

11. So he went to the city in tears and full of shame. He bought the bread from one person and the wine from another, but when it came to purchasing the meat, he was at his wit's end, saying to himself: "Woe is me, poor wretch! How am I to buy meat? Should I do it myself, or should I ask someone else to do it for me?" In the end, he found a layman and gave him the money in shame. After purchasing the meat, the man brought it to him.

12. The monk took the meat and the other items and brought them to the Elder, who said to him: "Now remember, you promised me that whatever I tell you, you will obey me. Well, take these things and go to your cell. Say the prayer [appointed for a meal—*Trans.*] and partake of one loaf, one pint of wine, and one pound of meat every day, and come back to me after ten days."

13. When the ascetic heard this, not daring to contradict the Elder, he took the comestibles and went away, weeping and distraught, saying to himself: "Alas! After such strict fasting, look how I have ended up! Should I carry out the order, or not? But if I do not, I will be disobeying God, for I gave the Elder my word that I would do whatever he told me, accepting it as coming from God. And now, O Lord, behold my misery. Have mercy on me and forgive my sins. Behold, I am compelled to act contrary to my intention of living a life of abstinence."

14. Uttering lamentations like these, he entered his cell. He did as the Elder had enjoined, and whenever he was about to eat, he would moisten the food with his tears, saying to God: "Why hast Thou abandoned me?" He passed the ten days in this manner, weeping and wailing and

reckoning himself unworthy of the monastic *schema.*

15. God, perceiving his humility, granted consolation to his heart. The ascetic, for his part, came to understand why he had fallen into such degradation—as he saw it—and gave thanks to God, Who loves mankind, saying to himself: "Truly all human righteousness 'is as a filthy rag' (Isaiah 64:6)" and, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, he that keepeth it watcheth but in vain" (Psalm 126:1). Thus, he returned to the Elder more exhausted physically than he was when he had gone for whole weeks without eating.

16. On seeing him so humbled, and noticing that the apes had disappeared, the Elder was greatly gladdened and welcomed him with rejoicing. After saying the customary prayer, they sat down in silence.

17. The Elder then said: "My child, God, out of His love for mankind, visited you and has not permitted the Enemy to gain possession of you; for when the Evil One is unable to prevent monastic strugglers from fulfilling their normal regimen, he is wont to urge them to undertake excessive feats, so that he might thereby drown them in the pit of conceit. There is nothing more loathsome to God than this passion.†

18. "Travel, therefore, along the royal way, as Scripture says,†† and do not deviate either to the right or to the left, but observe moderation in partaking of food, eating a measured quantity every evening. If the need arises to alter the appointed hour, either on account of infirmity or for some other reason, or if you wish to eat every other day, do not hesitate; for we are not under the Law, but under Grace.†††

19. "When you eat, do not desire to be satiated, but restrain yourself for the sake of continence. Indeed, always choose simpler fare in preference to sumptuous foods, and guard your heart by practicing humility in every way possible. For '[a] sacrifice unto God,' as the Prophet says, 'is a contrite spirit; a contrite and humbled heart God will not put to shame' (Psalm 50:19). Again, he says: 'I was brought low, and He saved me' (Psalm 114:6). Therefore, cast all your hope on the Lord, my child, and go your way in peace, 'and He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday' (Psalm 36:6)."

20. Having benefited and encouraged the brother with this advice, the Elder refected him with what he had at hand in his cell and let him depart in gladness, giving thanks to the Lord and saying: "Let those that fear Thee turn unto me, and those that know Thy testimonies," O Lord (Psalm 118:79); "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death" (Psalm 117:18); and, "The righteous shall chasten me with mercy, and reprove me" (Psalm 140:5). To himself, the brother said: "Return unto rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee" (Psalm 114:7), and so forth. After returning to his cell, he lived in accordance with the Elder's counsels and became an excellent monk.

21. A certain brother dwelled outside his village for many years, and never once during that time did he go to the village. He would say to the other monks: "Look how many years I have lived here without going back to the village, and yet you go there frequently."†††† They told†††† Abba Poimen about this brother, and the Elder said: "If I were he, I would go to the village by night and walk around it, lest my mind should glory in not having gone there."‡

22. A certain elderly anchorite, while wandering in the desert, used to say to himself, "I have attained to the virtues," and would pray thus to God: "Reveal to me, O Lord, whether I fall short in anything, and I will accomplish it." Wishing to humble his mind, God said to him: "Go to such and such an Archimandrite and do whatever he tells you." At the same time, He sent an Angel to this Archimandrite, to whom he gave the following message: "Such and such an anchorite is coming to you to ask you some questions. Tell him to take a goad and herd pigs."

23. When the Elder arrived at the Archimandrite's cell, they gave one another the kiss of peace and sat down. The anchorite asked the Archimandrite: "Tell me, what must I do to be saved?" The Archimandrite replied to him: "Will you do whatever I tell you?" "Yes," he said. "Then take this goad," said the Archimandrite, "and go herd pigs." The anchorite went and did as he was told, and started herding pigs. Those who saw him herding the pigs said to each other: "Do you see the great anchorite? Look, he has lost his mind; he has a demon and is herding pigs." When God saw his humility, and that he nobly endured the reproaches of men, He let him go back to the place from which he had come.

24. A brother consulted an Elder, saying, "What am I to do, for I am afflicted by pride?" The Elder said to him: "You do well, for you created Heaven and earth." Moved to compunction at this, the brother made a prostration, saying: "Forgive me, for I have done nothing of the kind." The Elder replied: "If He Who created these things came in humility, why are you, who are mere clay, vainglorious? What work do you have to boast about, you pitiful man?"

25. An Elder said: "Whenever I have managed to catch myself making mistakes, I have not repeated them; and whatever virtues I have attained I have not thought about again, 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before' (Philippians 3:13)."

26. A certain brother, beset by the thought of conceit, would say: "O my soul, you have now attained to the virtues." Wishing to overcome this thought, the brother placed his hand close to the fire beneath a seething cauldron and said to himself: "See, you are burning. So stop being high-minded.

27. "For when the Three Holy Youths were in the midst of the flames and were not burned, they were not puffed up in their hearts, but chanted a hymn to God with great humility, saying, 'with a contrite soul and a humble spirit may we be acceptable in Thy sight' (Hymn of the Three Youths 15). And you, who live in comfort, how can you be conceited?" In this way he conquered the demon of pride.

D. From Antiochos (author of the *Pandects*)

A proud monk is like an unfruitful tree, which, since it lacks deep roots, cannot withstand the impact of the wind; and just as a bubble disappears when it is burst, so also the memory of a proud man perishes after his death. Just as the prayer of a humble man propitiates God, so also the supplication of a proud man angers the Most High.

E. From Abba Cassian

1. In the same way that a pestilential and deadly disease does not destroy only one member of the body, but the entire body, so also pride incapacitates and destroys not just a part of the soul, but the entire soul.

Although each of the other passions disturbs the soul, they fight only against their contrary virtues and strive to overcome those virtues. For example, gluttony endeavors to destroy abstinence; fornication, chastity; avarice, non-acquisitiveness; anger, meekness; and the other forms of vice, their contrary virtues.

2. When pride masters our wretched soul, it is like a harsh tyrant who, having captured a great and lofty city, destroys it completely and razes it to its foundations. The Angel who fell from Heaven on account of his pride bears witness to this. Although he was entirely light and was for this reason called "Lucifer," on account of his haughtiness he became darkness and, being cast down into Hades, inherited unquenchable fire and unending torment, instead of Heavenly glory.

3. Let us, therefore, ponder on these things and be fearful, and let us guard our hearts with the utmost care (*cf.* Proverbs 4:23) from the pernicious spirit of pride, always repeating to ourselves, when we have achieved some virtue, the Apostolic saying: "Not I, but the Grace of God which was with me" (I Corinthians 15:10). Let us reflect on what was said by the Lord, "[W]ithout Me ye can do nothing" (St. John 15:5), by the Prophet, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psalm 126:1), and by the Apostle James: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (St. James 1:17). An unimpeachable witness to the fact that salvation comes to us by the Grace and mercy of God is the thief on the Cross, who inherited the Kingdom of Heaven, not as a reward for virtue, but by God's mercy and Grace.

4. When the passions become inactive, pride supervenes, either because the causes of the passions have been cut off, or because the demons craftily withdraw from us. The demon of pride has a twofold wickedness: He either persuades the monk to ascribe his achievements to himself and not to God, Who bestows all good things and helps us to achieve the virtues, or, when the monk is not thus persuaded, suggests that he despise those among the brethren who are less diligent than he.‡‡

5. The monk who is being vexed by this demon is unaware that the demon is persuading him to reject God's help. For if he despises those brothers as being unable to attain to virtue, he is obviously putting himself forward as one who has achieved it by his own power. But this is im-

possible, since the Lord said: "[W]ithout Me ye can do nothing" (St. John 15:5).

6. Moreover, our weakness is such that, when moved‡‡‡ to strive for what is good, we cannot bring it to fruition without the Bestower of good things. For he who has come to know the weakness of human nature has gained experience of the Divine power, and such a man, having attained to virtue through this power, never looks down on anyone. He knows that, just as God has helped him and delivered him from many grievous passions, He is able also to help all men when He so wills, and especially those who are struggling for His sake. Albeit, for reasons that God alone knows, He does not deliver all from their passions at once but, being a good and loving Physician, He heals each of those who put forth effort in His own good time.‡‡‡‡

7. If you desire to become judicious and modest, and not to be enslaved to the passion of conceit, always search among existing things for that which is concealed from your knowledge. And when you find very many different things that elude you, you will marvel at your foolishness and ignorance and humble your mind. In coming to knowledge of yourself, you will understand many great and wonderful things, since thinking that you know something does not allow you to make progress in knowledge.‡‡‡‡‡

* That is, a gift given as a blessing ("*εὐλογία*")—*Trans.*

** Reading "*ἐχόντων*" rather than "*δεικνύων*" (see *La Storia Lausiaca*, ed. G.J.M. Bartelink [Milan: A. Mondadori, 1974])—*Trans.*

*** *Cf.* Hippocrates, *On Breathing*, I.25—*Editors.*

**** "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7; *cf.* Proverbs 22:8)—*Trans.*

***** Reading "*διανοίας*" rather than "*διακονίας*" (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXIV, col. 1201B)—*Trans.*

• "[W]hat hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (I Corinthians 4:7).

•• Reading "*καὶ ἐν ἐρήμῳ διάγουσιν*" rather than "*κἂν ἐν ἐρήμῳ διάγῃς*" (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXVIII, col. 1520C)—*Trans.*

••• Reading "*ἔπαχμος*" rather than "*ἐπ' ἄκμονος*" (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXVIII, col. 1520D)—*Trans.*

•••• He said this, implying that for the sake of ascesis he did not eat cooked food, contenting himself with dry foods. The Elder, however, turning this statement on its head, said that it bespoke a lack of hospitality.

••••• Here, again, we see the distinction between vainglory and pride. The vainglorious person is primarily one who loves worthless and superficial human praise; the

proud person is one who despises other people out of a feeling of superiority.

† The version of this story printed in the *Μέγα Γεροντικόν* (Vol. III, pp. 244-246 [chapter 10, §277]) contains the following additional sentences: "...and there is no virtue more precious in His sight than that of humility. You see examples of both conceit and humility in the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. Extremes on either side, therefore, are very perilous; indeed, one of the Elders says that excesses come from the demons" (see Abba Poimen, §129 [*Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 353D])—*Trans.*

†† Numbers 20:17.

††† "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace" (Romans 6:14); "by Grace ye are saved" (Ephesians 2:5).

†††† Reading "*καθάπαξ*" rather than "*κἂν ἅπαξ*" (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 349B)—*Trans.*

††††† Reading "*εἶπον*" rather than "*εἶπε*" (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 349B)—*Editors.*

‡ We have here followed the reading "'Εγὼ εἰ ἤμην, ἀνέβαινον" (see *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. IV, p. 102 [chapter 15, §124] in preference to "'Εγὼ ἤμην ἀναβαίνων," as printed in *The Evergetinos* (Vol. III, p. 348; *cf. Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 349C)—*Trans.*

‡‡ Sections 4-7 are from St. Maximos the Confessor—*Editors.*

‡‡‡ Reading "*κινουμένη*" rather than "*πονουμένη*" (see *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. II, p. 19)—*Trans.*

‡‡‡‡ Reading "*σπευδόντων*" rather than "*παιδευόντων*" (see *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. II, p. 19)—*Trans.*

‡‡‡‡‡ This teaching of Abba Cassian [actually, St. Maximos—*Trans.*] is marvellous. It evinces very profound Christian insight and, as well, admirable and profound philosophical reflection. The mother of the love of learning is the awareness of one's ignorance, and its fruit is erudition. His final thought, in particular, reminds us of Socrates, who proclaimed what a great evil it is to "think that one knows what one does not know" (Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 29a).

Hypothesis XXX

Whence blasphemy is engendered and how it is cured.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. A brother was beset by thoughts of blasphemy and was ashamed to reveal them to anyone. Wherever he heard there were great Elders, he visited them to disclose these thoughts to them, but, being too ashamed to confess them, always returned empty-handed. He frequently visited Abba Poimen, and towards him he acted likewise: out of shame, not confessing anything.

2. Abba Poimen realized that the brother had such thoughts and was distressed that he would not confess them. One day, therefore, as he was escorting him on his way, he said: "Look, Brother, you have been coming here for so long to reveal the thoughts that you have, yet when you come, you are reluctant to confess them, and each time* you leave in sorrow, since you keep them to yourself. So, tell me, what is it that bothers you?" The brother replied to him: "The Devil wars against me to make me blaspheme against God, and I have been ashamed to say so; but now I am telling you." As soon as he had related the thought to the Elder, he felt relief.

3. The Elder said to him: "Do not be upset, my child, but when this thought comes to you, say: 'I am not responsible for this thought. May your blasphemy be upon you, Satan. My soul has no desire for this.' Whatever the soul does not want lasts but a short time." And the brother went away healed.

4. A brother once asked one of the Fathers about the thought of blasphemy, saying: "Abba, my soul is troubled by the demon of blasphemy. Have pity on me and tell me how this has happened to me and what I should do about it."

5. The Elder answered: "This kind of thought occurs to us because we malign, disparage, and condemn other people; or, otherwise, it

comes from pride, from following one's own will, from neglecting prayer, and from irritation and anger, all of which are signs of pride. For pride leads us into the aforementioned passions, from which the thought of blasphemy is engendered. If this thought lingers in one's soul, the demon of blasphemy hands one over to the demon of fornication. Oftentimes, the thought of blasphemy drives a man out of his mind, and unless he comes to his senses, he will fall into perdition."

B. From St. Anastasios the Sinaite

Question

1. How is it that the soul of a man frequently inwardly utters certain shameful, unclean, and foul words and entertains similar thoughts, involuntarily and unintentionally?

2. Oftentimes the soul also utters ungodly and blasphemous words against God Himself and the Holy Mysteries at the time of common worship, prayer, and Divine Communion, and so much so that some people, out of dejection and despair over such ungodly and blasphemous words, no longer consider themselves to be Christians.

3. Others have even contemplated suicide, on the ground that they have no hope of salvation, bringing to mind the words of the Lord: "[W]hosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (St. Matthew 12:31-32).

Answer

4. Thoughts of this kind occur to many people as a result of their pride. God permits Satan to tempt them, in order that, being humbled, they might come to repentance and rid themselves of their arrogant attitude.

5. Still others, who are devout and God-loving, are vexed by blasphemous thoughts because the demons envy them; for this reason, even certain holy and virtuous ascetics living in the desert fall into such thoughts.

6. The most irksome aspect of this warfare is that no one who is

being tried by it dares at all to confess these thoughts to a fellow human being, reckoning that nobody else in the world has such abominable and blasphemous thoughts.

7. Any other sin that one commits he has the courage to confess to his neighbor, but this kind of thought he does not dare to confess at all. When one is bothered by such a thought, he immediately supposes either that the earth will open beneath him and swallow him up, or that fire will descend from Heaven and consume him. Thus it is that some people wither and waste away from the great sorrow and despair that are caused by blasphemous thoughts.

8. Some exhaust their bodies by severe ascesis and all manner of hardships, in the hope of being freed from this thought. However, they do not succeed in delivering themselves from it, because such a temptation comes not from a man's will, but involuntarily, from demonic influence, and from that alone. For this reason, any believer who is vexed by blasphemous thoughts is not to be condemned or held responsible for them.

9. For that matter, how is it possible for us both to adore and blaspheme one and the same God? Even pagans do not blaspheme the gods that they worship. How is it possible for us who worship the one true God to fall into such a state? How is it possible for us to blaspheme our Lord, Creator, and Provider, Whom we worship, Whom we glorify, Whom we call upon, and Whom we acknowledge and confess as our only God and Master? How is it possible for us to blaspheme Him Whom we serve with both body and spirit and on Whom we constantly wait? How is it possible for us to blaspheme Him for Whose sake we have renounced homes, fatherlands, fathers, mothers, brothers, kinsfolk, friends, wives, and children, and even our own flesh? How is it possible for us to blaspheme Him for Whose sake we have readily crucified ourselves to all pleasures, enjoyments, and comforts, enduring—with all joy—hardship, exile, poverty, and all of the other afflictions that come to us from both demons and men who fight against the truth, who persecute us, revile us, and subject us to countless dolors, which we regard not as afflictions and sorrows, but rather as consolations and delights, on account of our love for the Master, for Whom, were it possible, we would gladly die many times over, accepting this possibility with pleasure?

10. How, then, could we simultaneously wish to insult and blaspheme our only God, Whom we love and revere so much? Such a thing is completely impossible and inadmissible. This temptation is caused not by us, but by demonic activity. For, if it came from us, we would surely utter with our mouths these words that we form in our minds. In point of fact, however, we choose rather to be consumed by fire than to utter such blasphemies.

11. We should consider this, too: that all sin depends on us. We fall into sin voluntarily, by obeying the appropriate passions. When we willingly accept evil thoughts, we arouse the passions; we are then driven by the passions to commit sinful acts.

12. If we want to resist evil thoughts and expel them from ourselves, we can do so with God's help, having recourse to unceasing prayer and the other remedies against evil. However, this pernicious thought of blasphemy, even if we vehemently desire to cast it out, to call upon God to help us fight against it, and to undertake, in so doing, every kind of ascesis and hardship, we cannot drive away from us, precisely because it is completely foreign to our nature and involuntary, deriving solely from satanic influence.

13. Hence, if we have blasphemous thoughts, we are exempt from blame and condemnation in the sight of God; for God requires us to give an account only for voluntary passions and thoughts, which we are capable of intercepting, but fail to intercept, and not for those that assail us against our will.

14. The Devil, being a spirit, imperceptibly whispers such ungodly words into the ears of our incorporeal soul against its will; and he, the loathsome one, does this especially when we are standing at prayer, or kneeling before God and imploring Him for help in fighting against blasphemous thoughts. Oftentimes he attacks us at common worship and when we are about to partake of the dread Mysteries, wishing to alienate us from God and to impede us from bowing our heads before Him and communing of the life-giving Mysteries.

15. Now that we have understood the craftiness of the Evil One, let us pay no attention whatsoever to such a temptation; rather, when the Devil begins to say such things to us, let us tell him: "May your toil re-

turn upon your own head, you wicked and unclean demon, and may your blasphemy come down upon your own head (*cf.* Psalm 7:16); for I worship the Lord my God, and Him alone shall I serve all the days of my life (*cf.* St. Matthew 4:10). But as for you, in return for this blasphemy you will have a more severe punishment, as an apostate from God who utters ungodly words against Him." In this way, and in no other way, can one overcome the demon of blasphemy.

16. From this we can understand that a blasphemous thought is not our own. As well, even though we loathe it, it persists for a long time and does not depart. In the case of the other thoughts and passions, when wholeheartedly abhorred, they are of brief duration and disappear of their own accord. But this thought of blasphemy, no matter how much we may detest it, does not withdraw, but remains with us for a very long time. From this, it is obvious that the thought of blasphemy does not depend on our will, but is a satanic temptation and assault. In order to prove this point more firmly, we will relate an ancient story.

17. The historian Philo recounts the following. One of the Fathers of Sketis was sorely vexed by a blasphemous thought and confessed it to Peter, the Hieromartyr of Alexandria. The Blessed Peter replied to him: "Go, my son, attend to the rest of your sins and leave the responsibility and blame for this thought to me. Anyone who wholeheartedly believes in God and worships Him is not subject to condemnation for having such a thought. It is an assault, through and through, on the part of the Devil, who wants to hinder us from struggling against him and to tear us away from serving and waiting on God. If you wish, I will prove this to you from my own experience, by relating to you what I myself both experienced and learned.

18. "I was once intensely bothered by such a thought, and I confessed it to the servant of God Paphnoutios. He told me the following: 'At the time when I confessed my faith at the tribunal, while my body was being lacerated by a variety of dreadful tortures and burned with fire, a demon whispered blasphemies within me.

19. "'Quivering with rage, I said to him: "You wicked spirit and author of all evil. I have given myself over to countless torments and sufferings, so as not to deny or blaspheme my Lord, and yet you whisper blasphemous thoughts to me? If I meant to blaspheme my God, how is

it that I am shedding my own blood for Him and my body is being torn to shreds? I confess my God and worship Him in the sight of all. It is obvious that the good confession and testimony is mine; but the blasphemy against God is yours and will return upon you.'" This was the story that the Blessed Peter recounted to the ascetic by way of advice.

20. I have also learned about Abba Pambo that he was once vexed by this demon. When he besought God to deliver him from it, he heard a voice from on high saying to him: "Pambo, Pambo, do not despond over someone else's sin, but attend to your own deeds and leave the blasphemies of the Evil One to him."

21. As for us, then, brethren, let us despise the thought of blasphemy as satanic and foreign to us, and in this way, through contempt, we shall be able to free ourselves from it by the Grace of God. For there is no other way in which we can overcome it. The other passions and the warfare aroused by thoughts may remain in us, but they require the right time and suitable circumstances for their accomplishment, and thus a man has the opportunity to fight against them and thwart their progress.

22. This thought, however, darts swiftly and unexpectedly into the soul like lightning, like a missile in flight or like the twinkling of an eye; it is not possible to overcome it or fight against it. It is, therefore, impossible to forestall it or stop the mouth of this incorporeal demon.

C. From St. Maximos

1. When the mind begins to make progress in the love of God, then the demon of blasphemy starts to tempt it. He suggests such thoughts to it as no man, but only their father, the Devil, could devise. He does this out of envy for the God-loving man, in order that, coming into despair at having conceived such thoughts, he might no longer dare to soar up to God in his customary prayer.

2. The pernicious demon receives no aid from this trickery in attaining his purpose, but in fact renders us more steadfast; for, in being attacked and fighting back, we become more proven and more genuine in our love for God. "Let their sword enter into their own hearts, and let their bows be broken" (Psalm 36:15).

* Reading "καθάπαξ" rather than "πάλιν" (*Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. III, p. 114 [chapter 10, §106]); *cf.* "κατὰ ἅπαξ" (*Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 344D)—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XXXI

The greatest among the virtues is discretion; the believer must act in all that he does with discretion. For what is done aimlessly, without discretion, even if it may be good, is not beneficial and can even be harmful.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Anthony said: "There are some who have worn out their bodies in asceticism, and yet, because they lack discretion, remain far from God."

2. Abba Ammonas said: "One man may carry an axe around all the time and yet not succeed in felling the tree; but another, who is experienced in tree-felling, brings the tree down in a short time." He meant that the latter was one possessing discretion.

3. An Elder was asked: "What is the work of a monk?" He replied: "Discretion."

4. The same Elder said: "Discretion is greater than all of the other virtues."

5. An Elder said: "A wandering mind is steadied by reading, vigil, and prayer; burning lust is withered by hunger, toil, and withdrawal into solitude; agitation of the incensive faculty is curbed by psalmody, forbearance, and compassion. But these remedies are effective only when applied at the proper time and in due measure; for what is untimely and excessive is short-lived, and such things are harmful rather than beneficial."*

6. Abba Longinos said to Abba Loukios: "I wish to dwell in a remote place." The Elder replied to him: "Unless you control your tongue, you will not be in a remote place, no matter where you go; but control your tongue and you will be far removed even here."** Longinos then said to him: "I wish to fast strictly." The Elder replied: "The Prophet Isaiah said:

Abba Loukios

'Even if thou shouldest bend thy neck as a ring, not even thus shall it be called an acceptable fast' (*cf.* Isaiah 58:5). You would do better to control your evil thoughts." Longinos said for the third time: "I wish to flee from men." The Elder replied: "If you do not first succeed in living among men, you will not succeed in living by yourself."

7. An Elder said: "Do not do anything before you have searched your heart, to see whether what you intend to do is in accordance with God's Will."

8. Abba Anthony said: "He who beats a lump of iron first considers in his mind what he is going to make—a scythe, a knife, or an axe—and works in accordance with his plan. In like manner, we should consider which virtue we are seeking to achieve, lest we labor in vain."

9. An Elder said that whatever is excessive comes from the demons.

10. Abba Poimen said: "Failure to foresee the consequences of something that we are going to do prevents us from making progress towards perfection."

11. An Elder said: "I have never taken a single footstep without first knowing where I would put my foot. I stand deep in thought, not allowing myself to move forward even one inch until God guides me."

12. The same Elder said: "Whatever I do, be it small or great, I first consider what fruit it will bear, whether in my thoughts or in my deeds."

13. The Elders used to say: "Just as fire burns logs, so the work of a monk ought to burn the passions."

14. A brother asked Abba Nisthero the Great: "What good work should I do, that I may attain thereby to eternal life?"*** The Elder answered: "Not all activities are equally appropriate for everyone. For Scripture tells us that Abraham was hospitable, and God was with him; that Elias loved stillness, and God was with him; and that David was humble, and God was with him. Therefore, whatever you see that your soul prefers—provided it is consonant with God's Will and you are capable of fulfilling it—choose this and practice it, guarding your heart, and you will be saved."

15. A brother asked an Elder: "Tell me how I can be saved." The Elder replied: "Let us strive to perform our ascetic work gradually, and we shall live in a spiritual way, and this will save us."****

16. Abba Sisoes used to say: "I prefer light and steady work to work that is, at the beginning, toilsome and thus soon discontinued."

B. From Abba Mark

Do not think or do anything without a God-pleasing purpose; for he who journeys without purpose labors in vain. When the mind forgets its God-pleasing purpose, then even a truly virtuous deed becomes unprofitable.

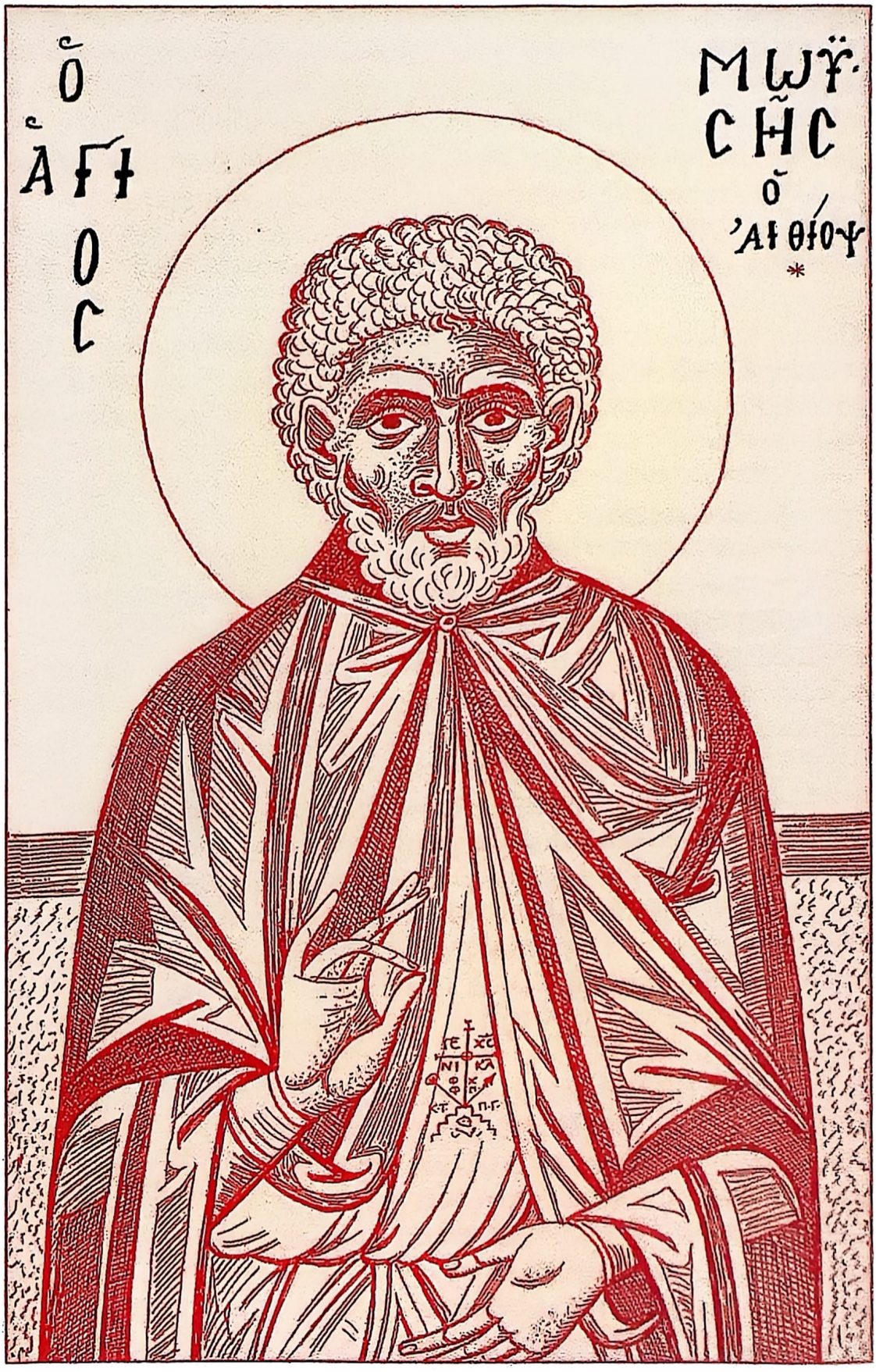
C. From Abba Cassian

1. When the holy Germanos, my friend, and I were in the desert of Sketis, where the most experienced monks dwell, we saw Abba Moses, a holy and Spirit-bearing man, whom we besought with tears to tell us some edifying words, whereby we might be able to attain to perfection. In response to our many entreaties, the Elder told us the following:

2. "My children, all arts and professions have some antecedent purpose. Those who look to this purpose and regulate their actions in accordance with it attain thereby to the ultimate end at which they aim. For example, the farmer eagerly works the earth, at times enduring the blazing heat of the sun, at times the bitter cold, his immediate purpose being to clear the earth of weeds and thistles, while his end is to enjoy its fruits.

3. "And the soldier pays no heed either to the dangers of war or to the hardship of service abroad, but eagerly braves them, having valorous deeds as his immediate purpose, while his ultimate end is promotion to a higher rank in return for his valor, the honor that comes from this, and monetary gain. To put it simply, all who engage in some art or profession have an antecedent purpose to which they direct their actions, so as to achieve the ultimate end they have set for themselves.

4. "Now, the antecedent purpose of our profession is purity of heart, while its ultimate end is the Kingdom of Heaven. It is, thus, impossible



St. Moses the Ethiopian

for the Kingdom of God to come to us without purity of heart. Thus, let our mind be fixed on this purpose at all times, and let us be zealous always to direct all of our thoughts, words, and deeds to it; and if it should happen that our heart departs from the straight path, let us bring it back at once and rectify it, using our purpose like a carpenter's plumb line.

5. "Knowing this, and putting it into practice, the Blessed Apostle Paul says: '[F]orgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God' (Philippians 3:13-14). We, too, do everything for the sake of this purpose; we disdain everything for its sake—fatherland, family, money, and the entire world—trampling on pleasures, not rendering evil to those who wrong us, and not taking revenge against those who insult or injure us. Rather, we bear all things—endure all things—so that we might acquire purity of heart. Should we forget this purpose, we will inevitably walk in darkness and err from the straight path; and we will stumble frequently and go astray.

6. "This, indeed, has happened to many. Having at the outset of their renunciation of the world scorned wealth, an abundance of possessions, and everything in the world, they subsequently become angry and upset over a mattock, a needle, a pen, or a book, still manifesting a tendency to show anger towards their brothers on account of the most insignificant of material things; and there is frequently formed in their hearts a worldly desire for objects of no worth, such that they develop a passionate attachment to them and take delight in things of no significance.

7. "They would not have suffered such a fall if they had remembered the purpose for which they disdained worldly things. We disdain all things for the love of God and for our neighbor, in order that we might acquire this love and become pure in heart, expelling from our hearts all of the pleasure and glory of this world. For he who separates himself from attachment to material things and detests all of the pleasure and glory of this world is at peace with all men. Hence, he makes his heart pure in every way.

8. "It is through purity of heart that the Kingdom of Heaven comes to us: 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' says the Lord, 'for they shall see God' (St. Matthew 5:8). From this we learn that we do not achieve per-

fection immediately upon renunciation of material things and withdrawal from the world, but only after we have attained to love for God and neighbor, which gives rise to purity of heart.

9. "We must, therefore, do all things for the sake of this love and disdain all pleasure and glory, gladly enduring fasts, vigils, and every other hardship, enthusiastically engaging in reading and psalmody. If it should ever happen that we are hindered by some necessary and God-pleasing task from observing our customary fasting and reading, we should not neglect***** love, which brings about purity of heart. For the gain• that comes to us from fasting and reading is not as great as the harm that comes from despising our brother and grieving him. Fasts, vigils, the reading of Scripture, and renunciation of the entire world do not constitute perfection, as we have said, but are means for the attainment of perfection.

10. "When we have not achieved love for God and our neighbor, it is vain for us to take pride in fasting, vigils, non-acquisitiveness, and the reading of Scripture, since perfection does not reside in these, but is attained through them; for he who has achieved love is pure in heart and has God within him, and his mind is ever with God and contemplates His beauty.

11. "You should know this, too: that unless a monk seeks discretion with all of his strength and zeal, examines everything with discretion, and thinks, speaks, and acts with discretion, it is inevitable that, like someone wandering in the night, he will not only fall into the most dreadful pits of evil, but will stumble even on level and straight ground.

12. "For discretion is no minor virtue, but is one of the most important gifts of the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle teaches when he says: 'For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; ...to another discerning of spirits' (I Corinthians 12:8,10); and shortly thereafter he adds: 'But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit' (I Corinthians 12:11).

13. "Discretion is a kind of acropolis and queen among the other virtues. She teaches him who possesses her to shun all deficiency and excess and always to travel along the royal path, not allowing himself either to be deceived from the right through excessive asceticism—rea-

sonable though it might appear—or to be enticed from the left into indolence and laxity.

14. "Discretion is like an eye and lamp of the soul. It presents all things to a man as they are, precisely distinguishing unimportant things from those that are more important and showing him which things are snares of his adversaries and which things come from Divine Providence, thereby enabling him to live in a God-pleasing manner and to walk without straying or stumbling on the dark and rough path of this life, following, and being guided by, the light of discretion. It is discretion that consolidates the virtues and insures that they are, and are called, virtues; if disjoined from discretion, they cease to be virtues at all and are, indeed, frequently reckoned to be vices.••

15. "For many have exhausted themselves with fasts and vigils, have withdrawn to the desert, have practiced non-acquisitiveness to an extreme degree, have been so generous in giving alms that they no longer had enough left to give in order to fulfill their holy aspirations, and have displayed every other virtue, but have subsequently fallen pitifully from virtue and slipped into vice. They suffered this because they did not possess the gift of discretion, as St. Anthony the Great pronounced in the company of all the Fathers, and as the other Fathers agreed.••• Let us confirm what we are saying from sacred history.

16. "Saul, to whom the kingship of Israel was first entrusted, not having this lamp of discretion, became darkened in mind and was unable to discern that it was more pleasing to God for him to obey the holy Samuel by slaying Agag, the King of the Amalekites, than to offer sacrifice (I Kings 15:22). In sparing Agag, he offended God through the very actions by which he supposed that he was serving Him, and he was dethroned. But let us cite some contemporary examples.

17. "Recall Elder Heron, of whom you surely cannot be unaware, and the pitiful fall, worthy of countless lamentations, which he suffered before our very eyes. Having spent fifty years in the desert, observing severe austerity and intense abstinence, and pursuing extreme isolation and solitude beyond all of the other Fathers who lived there, he, after so many struggles and labors, fell into dire peril, precisely because he lacked discretion.

18. "Following his own reasoning, he practiced fasting and isolation from other men to such an extent that he did not go to Church even on the Feast of Holy Pascha, lest, in coming together with the Fathers and brothers and eating with them, he should be forced to partake of legumes or whatever other cooked food was set out on the table, thus appearing to lapse from his self-imposed purpose and rule.

19. "Obeying his own will for a long time, therefore, and distancing himself from the Fathers, he later welcomed a demon as if he were an Angel of light.•••• After worshipping the demon, he was commanded by the latter to throw himself into a very deep well in the middle of the night, so that he might know from experience what great honor he had obtained from God, on account of his exceeding virtue and his God-pleasing labors, and so that he would not be subject to any danger whatsoever in the future.

20. "Not discerning in his mind who was offering him this advice, but believing in the deception as true, he hurled himself into the well in the middle of the night. By Divine dispensation, his brothers realized within a short time what had occurred, but were only able with much exertion to pull him up half-dead from the well. After being rescued, he survived for two days and died on the third day, leaving his brothers and Paphnoutios the Presbyter with inconsolable grief. Paphnoutios, moved by great loving-kindness and mindful of Heron's many labors and of the many years in which he had persevered in the desert, commemorated him at the *Prothesis* among the reposed, lest he be numbered among those who had committed suicide.

21. "Equally didactic is the story of two brothers who lived beyond the desert of the Thebaid, where the Blessed Anthony once dwelled. One day, they decided to journey to the inner desert, which was vast and uncultivated, resolving between themselves not to accept any sustenance from men, but only what the Lord Himself would miraculously provide for them.

22. "So they wandered about the desert for a long time, becoming exhausted through hunger. When the Mazikes,••••• who were just about the fiercest and most savage of all tribes, spied them in the distance, exhausted and barely able to breathe, these tribesmen, by Divine Providence, transformed their innate ferocity into loving kindness and

went to meet the brothers, carrying loaves of bread.

23. "The one brother, whose faculty of discretion had returned to him, accepted the loaves with joy and thanksgiving. As he partook of the bread, he regained his strength and reflected that these men—who were so savage and ferocious and who always rejoiced in spilling human blood—would not have shown compassion to them in their exhaustion by bringing them food, had God not moved them to do so. But the other, spurning the food—since it was offered him by men—and persisting in his undiscerning intent, expired from the weakness brought on by not eating.

24. "Although, at the outset, they had both shown thoroughly poor judgment and had conceived an irrational and disastrous plan, the one, who subsequently had recourse to discretion, effectively corrected what he had precipitously and recklessly decided; but the other, persisting in his foolhardy resolve and lacking discretion, drew down upon himself the very death that the Lord had wished to avert.

25. "And what am I to say about another ascetic, whose name I will refrain from mentioning, since he is still alive? He frequently entertained a demon as though he were an Angel, received revelations through him, and continually saw the light of a lamp in his cell. Later on, he was ordered by the demon to offer his own son, who lived with him in his monastery, as a sacrifice to God, on the grounds that he would thereby be vouchsafed the honor accorded the Patriarch Abraham. He was so obedient to this demonic counsel that he would actually have carried out the slaughter of his son, had his son not seen him sharpening a knife—something which he was not in the habit of doing—and preparing the fetters with which he was intending to bind him as a whole burnt offering, and fled to safety.

26. "It would take me a long time to enumerate all of those who have been deluded by the Devil, and have fallen from virtue into vice, because they did not use discretion, which is the root, crown, and bond of all the virtues. A man cannot acquire this virtue unless he has true humility. An example of true humility is to reveal to our spiritual Fathers not only what we do, but also what we think, and in no instance to trust our own thoughts but to follow the words of our Fathers in all things and to regard as good or bad whatever they judge to be so. This activ-

ity enables a monk to traverse the path of life unharmed and to overcome all of the Devil's snares; and it leads up to Heaven him who practices it.

27. "It is impossible for one who regulates his life in accordance with the judgment and counsel of spiritually advanced monastics to fall prey to demonic deception. Therefore, he who does not trust in the judgments of his own intellect, but follows every teaching and precept of the Fathers, is soon vouchsafed, with God's help, the gift of true discretion, which instructs the monk always to avoid excesses as being harmful when it comes to diet, sleep, or any other aspect of the ascetic life. Indeed, we know of a number of monks who were defeated, not by gluttony, but who were overcome through excessive fasting and lapsed into the same passion of gluttony on account of the debility caused by immoderate fasting.

28. "I myself remember once suffering something like this as a result of ill-advised fasting. I fasted so much that I completely lost my appetite for food. Since I went for so long a time without eating, I no longer had any desire for food. I did not eat unless visitors forced me to eat against my will, when I had no appetite. Being thus constrained, I gradually regained my appetite.

29. "I also deprived myself of sleep to such an extent that sleep completely departed from me. I think that this happened by a machination of the demons, since I went without sleep for very many nights and would have been in some danger from this, if the Lord, in His love for mankind, had not subsequently, at my entreaty, allowed me to sleep, thereby strengthening the weakness of my human nature.

30. "I was, therefore, in graver danger from immoderate abstinence from food and sleep than from gluttony and excessive sleep."

D. From St. Maximos

1. If you wish to be just, allot to each part of you—I mean, to the soul and the body—that which it deserves: to the rational faculty of the soul, readings, spiritual meditations, and prayer; to the incensive faculty, spiritual love—the opposite of hatred; to the appetitive faculty, chastity and self-control; to the body, food and clothing (I St. Timothy

6:8)—the only things that it needs.

2. The mind functions according to nature when it keeps the passions in subjection, when it contemplates† the principles of existing things, and when it abides with God.

3. Just as health and disease pertain to the body of a living creature, and light and darkness to the eye, so virtue and vice pertain to the soul and knowledge and ignorance to the mind. Do not devote all of your attention to the flesh, but prescribe for it an ascetical regimen in accordance with its strength and turn your entire mind inward; "[f]or bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things" (I St. Timothy 4:7-8).

4. He who does not know how to walk the spiritual path makes no attempt to rectify passionate mental images, but devotes all of his concern to the flesh, either indulging in gluttony and licentiousness, becoming aggrieved, angry, and rancorous, and thereby darkening his mind, or engaging in immoderate asceticism and thereby befuddling his intellect.

5. Scripture does not prohibit any of the things given to us by God for our use, but it castigates immoderation and corrects recklessness. For example, it does not forbid us to eat, to have money, or to manage it properly, but it does forbid gluttony, avarice, and the like. It does not even forbid us to think of these things, for this is why they were made; what it does forbid is to think about them in a passionate way.

6. The commandments of the Lord teach us to use morally neutral things in a sensible way; the sensible use of neutral things purifies the state of the soul; and the pure state of the soul gives rise to discretion.

E. From St. Ephraim

1. Before beginning any task, think about its outcome; and before a battle, size up your opponent; for Scripture says: "[H]e that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (I St. John 5:18).

2. Let the Enemy not find you, O monk, doing anything inconsis-

tent with your monastic profession, and he will never frighten you.

F. From St. Isaac

1. Ease and idleness are the perdition of the soul, and they can cause it more harm than the demons.

2. When you compel an ill body to do more than it is capable of, you instill darkness upon darkness in the soul and, moreover, you cause it to become confused.

3. If you give a strong body over to ease and idleness, the soul that dwells in it will commit every kind of wickedness; in such a case, the soul contemns even the desire for what is good and perverts it into a desire for pernicious things.

4. When the soul becomes intoxicated with the joy of its hope and with the gladness that is of God, it renders the body insensible to afflictions, even if it is infirm. The body can then bear a twofold burden without realizing it, since, together with the soul, it enjoys both spiritual nourishment and spiritual consolation.

5. A heart filled with sorrow over its weakness and inability to perform bodily deeds does duty, through this sorrow, for all physical activity. Bodily deeds performed without sorrow of mind are like a body without a soul.

6. He who is sorrowful in heart, but dissolute in his senses, is like a man who has an only son and slaughters him with his own hands; for sorrow of mind is a precious gift of God, and he who bears it as he ought bears holiness in himself.

* The point of this valuable advice from an unknown ascetic [actually, Evagrios of Pontos—*Editors*] is the necessity for moderation in all aspects of the ascetic life. This moderation, combined with the need of the moment, is what constitutes the virtue of discretion. We might encapsulate this virtue in the following phrase: as necessary, as much as necessary, and when necessary.

** See Hypothesis XIII, Section E, subsection 9, Book I: "Abba Tithoes said that to withdraw to a remote place (ξενιτεία) is for a man to close his mouth, regardless of where he is."

*** "And, behold, one came and said unto him, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?'" (St. Matthew 19:16).

**** For a slightly different version of this apophthegm, see the following: "A brother asked an Elder: 'Tell me how I can be saved.' The Elder replied: 'Strive to perform your ascetic work gradually, and you will be saved" (*Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. I, p. 216 [chapter 1, §105])—*Editors.*

***** I have restored the words "ἀμελεῖν ἐκείνης," which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*, from the *Φιλοκαλία* (Vol. I, p. 83)—*Trans.*

• I have restored the word "*κέρδος*," which is missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*, from the *Φιλοκαλία* (Vol. I, p. 83)—*Trans.*

•• The meaning of this excellent point is that insofar as a man does not do what is good with discretion, he may end up performing a vice rather than a virtue; for example, offering alms for outward show is not a virtue, but a vice.

••• Whereas the text printed in *The Evergetinos* implies that St. Anthony expressed his views at a meeting of all of the desert Fathers, in the Latin original of his *Conferences*—of which the Greek version cited in the present hypothesis is an epitome—St. John has Abba Moses say: "I remember that once, when I was still a boy and living in the region of the Thebaid, where the blessed Antony used to dwell, some elders came to him to ask about perfection" (*John Cassian: The Conferences*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, O.P. [New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997], p. 84)—*Trans.*

•••• "[F]or Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:14).

••••• The Mazikes were a fierce Mauritanian people of ancient times, who inhabited the region of Africa now known as Algeria.

† Reading "*θεωρῇ*" rather than "*ἐνεργεῖ*" (see *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. II, p. 45)—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XXXII

That without help from on high, the ascetic struggler can neither be delivered from vice nor acquire virtue, and that adoption into sonship does not come about from deeds, but from Divine Grace.

A. From Abba Mark

1. When you have done something virtuous, remember Him Who said: "[F]or without Me ye can do nothing" (St. John 15:5). God is the source of every virtuous deed, just as the sun is the source of daylight. Wishing to show that the fulfillment of every commandment is an obligation, whereas adoption into sonship is a gift bestowed upon men through His own Blood,* the Lord says: "[W]hen ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (St. Luke 17:10). Thus, the Kingdom of Heaven is not a reward for deeds, but a gift of Grace from the Master that is prepared for His faithful servants. A slave does not demand freedom as a reward for his labor, but satisfies his master as a debtor and awaits freedom as a gift.

2. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3), and He grants freedom to those who serve Him well; for He says: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (St. Matthew 25:21). He who relies on mere knowledge of Divine things is not yet a faithful servant; a faithful servant is one who manifests his faith in Christ, the Giver of the commandments, through obedience to Him. He who honors the Master does what He commands; when he sins or disobeys, he patiently endures the consequences as his comeuppance.

3. There are some who, though they do not keep the commandments, think nonetheless that they believe correctly; others, who do keep the commandments, expect the Kingdom as their due reward. Both are in error regarding the truth, for a master is not obligated to give any

reward to his servants; on the other hand, those who have not served their master properly do not obtain their freedom.

4. If Christ died for us, according to the Scriptures (Romans 5:8), and we do not live for ourselves, but for Him Who died and rose for us (*cf.* II Corinthians 5:15), it is clear that we are bound to serve Him until death. How, therefore, can we reckon that sonship is something that God owes us?

5. Christ is Master according to essence and Master according to Œconomy, because He created us from non-being and redeemed us through His own Blood, when we were dead in sin; and to those who so believe, He grants His Grace.

6. When you hear Scripture saying that "He shall reward every man according to his works" (St. Matthew 16:27), it does not mean works that merit Gehenna or the Kingdom, but works deriving from faith in Him or lack thereof; for Christ renders to each, not as a dealer in commodities, but as God our Creator and Redeemer.

7. All of us who have been vouchsafed the laver of regeneration offer good works to God, not for the sake of recompense, but in order to preserve the purity given to us through Baptism. Every good work that we perform through our own nature causes us to refrain from the opposite evil; but without Divine Grace, it cannot add to our sanctification.

8. The abstemious man refrains from gluttony; he who has renounced possessions from covetousness; he who maintains inner silence from loquacity; the modest man from unchastity; the frugal man from avarice; the gentle man from agitation; the humble-minded man from vainglory; the obedient man from quarrelling; and the self-critical man from hypocrisy. Likewise, the man who prays refrains from despair; the poor man from affluence; the Confessor of the Faith from denying it; and the Martyr from idolatry.

9. Do you see how every virtue that is practiced until death is nothing other than abstinence from sin? Virtue is a work within our natural powers, not a means for purchasing the Kingdom of Heaven. A man preserves with difficulty what belongs to him by nature, but Christ bestows sonship through the Cross. He who does good and seeks a re-

ward for it is not serving God, but his own will. It is not possible for one who has sinned to escape retribution, save through repentance appropriate to his deed.

10. Some say that we cannot do good unless we manifestly receive the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Those who by choice incline towards pleasures always avoid doing what is in their power on the ground that they are helpless.** Now, Grace*** has been given mystically to those Baptized in Christ; but it becomes active in us to the extent that we fulfill the commandments. Grace does not cease to assist us secretly, but it is up to us to do good according to our ability.

11. Grace initially awakens the conscience, so that it judges as God wills; thus it is that evildoers have repented and led God-pleasing lives. Again, it may be hidden in the admonition of a neighbor; and sometimes it is imparted to the mind while one is reading and, as a natural consequence, instructs the mind regarding its truth. If, then, we do not conceal the talent given to us in this particular fashion, we shall clearly enter into the joy of the Lord (St. Matthew 25:14-30). He who seeks the benefactions of the Spirit before he has observed the commandments is like a slave bought with silver who, upon being purchased, demands that his manumission be inscribed in the deed of purchase.

12. The efforts that we put forth for the sake of piety are immediately followed by Divine help. We must learn this through God's law and our conscience. A seed will not grow without earth and water, and a man will not receive spiritual benefit apart from voluntary exertions and God's help.

13. He who truly repents does not regard his effort as compensation for his former sins, but it is through such effort that he propitiates God. If we are duty-bound to do daily whatever good our nature is capable of, what is left over for us to offer to God in return for the evils that we committed before? However much virtue we may accomplish today, it does not offset our previous negligence, but reproves it.

14. Fear of God compels us to fight against evil; when we fight against evil, the Grace of the Lord destroys it.

15. Brethren, our struggle is temporary, but the recompense and the

rewards are eternal. The more eagerly one strives, so much more vehemently does the Enemy, ablaze with fury, assault him. But the Grace of God unfailingly grants strength and succor to him who fights, provided he calls upon it wholeheartedly.

16. However, if someone allows himself to slacken and hesitates to call upon God's Grace to assist him, and is thus overcome by the Enemy, since he is not receiving the assistance of Grace, let him accuse himself of laziness. For just as when someone who has healthy hands and who, when faced with an abundance of food, hesitates to stretch them forth and enjoy the good fare becomes the cause of his own hunger, so also he who neglects to call upon God's Grace and be filled with its strength becomes the cause of his own fall and perdition.

17. He who is ever vigilant and calls upon Divine Grace is vouchsafed the aid that comes from it. After swiftly laying low the Enemy, Grace puts him under a man's feet, glorifies the man, and is itself glorified through this victory. Without the help of Grace, the heart is incapable of engaging in spiritual warfare, of acquiring compunction, of giving thanks to the Master as it should, or of doing any other good. Rather, it is poor and destitute of goods and foul and abominable thoughts dwell in it, like an owl in a ruined house (Psalm 101:7).

* I have restored the words "Wishing to show" and "whereas adoption into sonship is a gift bestowed upon men through His own Blood," which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*, from the *Φιλοκαλία* (Vol. I, p. 109)—*Trans.*

** I have restored the words "on the grounds that they are helpless," which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*, from the *Patrologia Græca* (Vol. LXV, col. 937C)—*Trans.*

*** That is, the Grace, or help from on high, of which they claim to be destitute—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XXXIII

What is the cause of temptations and tribulations, what is the benefit thereof, and what are their different kinds.

A. From Abba Mark

1. Brethren, none of the tribulations that befall each one of us comes upon him unjustly; all things occur in accordance with the just judgment of God. Some suffer on account of their own misdeeds, others on account of their neighbor's misdeeds. Scripture says: "All evils come upon the unjust into their bosoms; but all righteous things come from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:33). Elsewhere it says: "All the works of the Lord are done with righteousness"; and: "[W]hatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

2. Having this attitude towards tribulations, the Holy David, when afflicted by Semeï* at the behest of God, confesses that he is suffering through his own fault. He makes this clear when he says in one of the Psalms: "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are righteousness, and that with truth Thou hast humbled me" (Psalm 118:75); and elsewhere he says: "Thou hast made me a reproach unto the foolish. I was dumb and opened not my mouth, for Thou hast made me" (Psalm 38:9-10).

3. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the other Prophets prophesied both to the Hebrew people and to the nations that afflictions would befall them in the future because of everyone's sins, indicating at the same time the causes of the calamities to come. They would typically say: "In return for having said such and such and having done such and such, such and such will come upon you."

4. It is the mark of a perfect man not to be unaware of his own lapses. But if it is difficult to understand the provenance of conspicuous lapses, how much more difficult it is to understand the thoughts that lead to them. Being unaware, for the most part, of our own wickedness, we are perturbed by the calamities that befall us.

5. Let us learn, therefore, as rational people, that the Lord brings afflictions upon us for our benefit, producing many good results in us through them: first, the uncovering of the evil thoughts that secretly preoccupy us; after these thoughts have been uncovered, the acquisition of true and unfeigned humility; and finally, the disclosure of our vain conceit, as Scripture says: "[A]ll the workers of iniquity look down; it is that they may be destroyed for ever and ever" (Psalm 91:8).

6. Unless, therefore, we endure adversities with faith and thanksgiving, we will be unable to uncover the evil that lurks within us. As long as this is not clearly uncovered, we can neither reject present evil thoughts, nor seek forgiveness for our past misdeeds, nor safeguard ourselves from future misdeeds. However, we should know this, too: that while adversities and chastisements are not outwardly similar to the causes that give rise to them, at the spiritual level they preserve a complete parity of justice.

7. We can understand this through Holy Scripture, too. Was it not those who died under the tower of Siloam** who had destabilized a tower and caused it to fall on others? And was it not the Israelites who were led off into captivity in Babylon for seventy years, for the sake of repentance, who had previously captured others in order to force *them* to repentance?***

8. This is not so with events that occur for our correction. Just as soldiers, when caught *in flagrante delicto*, are punished, but do not suffer the same evils that they have committed, so also we are all chastened through the events that happen to us, in season, appropriately, and for our repentance, but not in the same way, nor at the same time, nor through the same events. And this is what leads many to disbelief in the justice of God: the delay in time between the sin and its punishment and the disparity between the sin and its punishment.

Question

9. Many, therefore, are the afflictions that befall us. On the one hand, we suffer afflictions through men who envy us, malign us, discredit us, slander us, flatter us, lead us astray, despoil us, scandalize us, despise us, hate us, fight against us, strike us, maltreat us, persecute us, and whatever else men do to their fellowmen. Or we suffer from our own

body, when it swells with lust, fights against our spirit, demands rest, and falls into various diseases. Or we are bitten by dogs, venomous serpents, or man-eating beasts. And on top of all this, we at times have to contend with famines, earthquakes, icy cold, burning heat, old age, poverty, loneliness, and so forth.

10. On the other hand, we also suffer afflictions through evil spirits, against which the Apostle declared that we must struggle.**** They scrutinize our deeds and words, endeavoring thereby to surmise what our thoughts are. Now, as long as our mind, endowed as it is with free will, pays no attention to such demonic probings, and does not abandon all genuine hope by stirring up thoughts, one will neither utter any words nor perform any deeds to gratify the demons.

11. You yourself said that all calamities befall each person in proportion to his responsibility. Explain to us their causes, so that we may truly believe that we are responsible for our tribulations and that we ought to endure the afflictions that come upon us, lest on the Day of Judgment we incur a heavier punishment, not only as sinners, but also as not having accepted healing for our sins.

Answer

12. Each person's thoughts are the cause of every occurrence. I could have said that both words and deeds are also causes, but because they do not precede ideation, I shall ascribe everything to thoughts. When preceded by thought, therefore, both our words and our deeds afford us the opportunity for interaction with each other.*****

13. There are two kinds of interaction: one derives from love, the other from malice. Through our interactions we assume responsibility for one another in ways we do not know. Such assumptions of responsibility, however, are followed by consequences, as Scripture says: "He who standeth surety for his friend delivereth his hand to an enemy" (*cf.* Proverbs 6:1). Thus, each of us is responsible, not only for what happens to himself, but also for what happens to his neighbor, in those matters in which he has assumed responsibility for him.

Question

14. We wish to learn about one kind of assumption of responsibility, namely, that which derives from malice.

Answer

15. The assumption of responsibility that derives from malice is involuntary, and it comes about in the following way: one assumes responsibility involuntarily for the tribulations of his neighbor. For example, he who despoils another is responsible for the tribulations of him whom he despoils. By the same logic, he who slanders another is responsible for the tribulations of him whom he slanders; he who defrauds another is responsible for the tribulations of him whom he defrauds; he who oppresses another is responsible for the tribulations of him whom he oppresses; he who maligns another is responsible for the tribulations of him whom he maligns. In short, he who wrongs another is responsible for the tribulations of him whom he wrongs.

16. Scripture bears witness to this when it says: "A righteous man escapeth from a snare, and the ungodly man is delivered up in his place" (Proverbs 11:8); and "He that diggeth a pit for his neighbor shall fall into it, and he that rolleth a stone, rolleth it upon himself" (Proverbs 26:27). Therefore, "if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God," as the Apostle puts it, "what shall we say? Is God unrighteous Who inflicteth wrath" (Romans 3:5) on those who are not chastened through calamities, but are even angered by them? God forbid.

Question

17. Glory to Thee, O God! We believe this to be the case, having heard an orderly exposition of the matter. Now tell us about the assumption of responsibility that derives from love.

Answer

18. The assumption of responsibility that derives from love is that which our Lord Jesus Christ bequeathed to us, first by healing the infirmities of our souls and then by curing every disease and every sickness,• taking away the sin of the world,•• purifying human nature, granting deliverance from death to those who firmly believe in Him, instructing us in right belief, teaching us piety, and suffering unto death

for the sake of love.

19. Having taught us, through His sacrifice and sufferings, to have patience in afflictions, through the coming of the Spirit He bestowed upon us those things which "[e]ye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (I Corinthians 2:9), and took upon Himself the tribulations that were our due. He was reviled, mocked, slandered, slapped, bound, delivered to Pilate, buffeted, given vinegar and gall to drink—and what more shall I say? He was pierced with nails, crucified, and transfixed by a lance, and in this way, sharing with us in flesh and spirit and deigning to suffer for our sake, He again entrusted this law to His own: to the Apostles, Prophets, Fathers, and Patriarchs, instructing through the Holy Spirit the Prophets and Patriarchs that came before Him, and those that came after Him through His immaculate Body.

20. Revealing this kind of assumption of responsibility, He said: "Fear not, I have overcome the world" (*cf.* St. John 16:33); again: "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (St. John 17:19); and again: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (St. John 15:13). Hence, St. Paul, emulating the Lord, said: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church" (Colossians 1:24), alluding thereby to the assumption of responsibility that derives from love.

21. Do you wish to learn more clearly how all of the Apostles interacted with us through thought, speech, and action, and through this interaction accepted our tribulations? They did so through thought, by explaining the Scriptures to us, citing the Prophets, persuading us to believe in Christ as the Redeemer and to worship Him, assuring us that He is the Son of God by nature, praying for us, shedding tears, dying, and whatever else it is possible to accomplish for the faithful through the intellect.•••

22. They did so through speech, by exhorting us, admonishing us, chiding us, reproving us for our lack of faith, reproaching us, castigating us for our ignorance, preaching the true Faith, confessing Christ, checking the spread of wrong belief at every time, in every place, and

in every way; not assenting to falsehood, not conversing with those who boasted according to the flesh (II Corinthians 11:18), not associating with the vainglorious, not cowering at all before the arrogant, disparaging the wicked, embracing the humble, making friends with the devout, and teaching us to do the same.

23. They did so through action, being persecuted, derided, subjected to privations, afflicted, maltreated, imprisoned, killed, and whatever else they suffered for our sake.•••• In this way, therefore, through their interaction with us, they took our tribulations upon themselves, so that we might be delivered from them. They themselves said: "And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation" (II Corinthians 1:6).

24. Having received the law from the Lord, they transmitted it to us, saying: "If the Lord laid down His life for us, we, too, ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (*cf.* I St. John 3:16); and again: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

25. If we have understood these two kinds of interactions with each other (that which is due to malice and that which is due to love) and the assumption of responsibility that necessarily follows from them, and also the tribulations that occur in proportion to the nature of these interactions, let us not be curious as to how, when, or through what means they befall us. For it belongs to God alone to know what kind of testing is suitable for each person,••••• the urgency of that which cannot be postponed, and the contribution of all of nature to this end. We, for our part, ought to believe in the justice of God and to know that everything that happens to us involuntarily does so either on account of love or on account of malice; and for this reason, we must endure it and not avert it, lest we add sins to our sins.

26. We should know this, too—that there are three kinds of right conduct before God through which a man can be saved: The first is that of one who does not sin; the second is that of one who has sinned but endures the fearful afflictions consequent thereto; and the third is that of those who sin, lacking the endurance to withstand such afflictions with patience and, not having been corrected through appropriate ad-

versities here on earth, will be chastised in the future life, unless God, seeing them *lamenting their lack of patience and humbling themselves,* blots out their sins, in a way known only to Him, by His all-powerful Grace.

27. If we are unable to accomplish the first, since it is difficult of attainment, let us at least not neglect the second; but if we fail in that, let us be diligent in the third, lest we completely lose hope of our salvation.

28. I entreat you above all, brethren, to pay precise attention to what has been said, lest I without avail endure temptations for my teaching, and you, through laziness, consign what I have said to oblivion. For forgetfulness is the daughter of indifference, and both are the offspring of unbelief. A distressing occurrence puts the prudent man in remembrance of God,† but correspondingly afflicts the man who forgets God. Let all involuntary suffering teach you the remembrance of God, and you will not lack occasion for repentance.

29. Every affliction endured for God's sake is a true work of piety; for true love is tested through adversities. Do not say that you have acquired virtue without affliction, for virtue acquired with ease is unproven in worth. Consider the outcome of every involuntary affliction, and you will find therein the destruction of sin. Good things are prepared for men through affliction†† and, likewise, evils through vainglory and pleasure.

30. If someone sins openly and does not repent, and does not suffer any affliction until his death, you can be sure that his judgment in the next life will be merciless. Just as the bitterness of absinthe is beneficial for those who suffer from poor digestion, so also it is beneficial for the morally degenerate to suffer misfortunes; the physical medicine of absinthe restores good health to the former, while the spiritual medicine of afflictions leads the latter to repentance.

31. If you do not wish to suffer evil, do not seek to do evil, for the former is an inevitable consequence of the latter. "[F]or whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). When we voluntarily sow evil and involuntarily reap it, we ought to marvel at the just judgment of God. He who does not choose to suffer voluntarily for the truth will be the more grievously chastised by involuntary sufferings.

32. He who knows the Will of God and does not do it to the best of his ability will escape the great torments of Hell by enduring small tribulations in the present life. Do not suppose that every affliction befalls men on account of sin; for there are those who please God and yet suffer tribulations. As Scripture says, "[T]he iniquitous shall be banished" (*cf.* Psalm 36:28);††† similarly, "[A]ll that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II St. Timothy 3:12).

33. He who honors the Master does what He commands; when he sins or disobeys, he patiently endures the consequences as his comeuppance. If you are a lover of learning, become a lover of spiritual labor.†††† For mere knowledge puffs a man up (I Corinthians 8:1). Tribulations that happen to us unexpectedly teach us by Divine Providence to be lovers of spiritual labor and lead us to repentance even against our will.

34. The afflictions that befall men are the products of their own evils; but if we patiently endure them through prayer, we shall once again enjoy God's blessings. A sign of true knowledge is that one patiently endures afflictions and does not blame other people for his own misfortunes.

35. He who has discovered that external tribulations visit him by God's justice has, in seeking the Lord, found knowledge with justice (Proverbs 16:8). If you understand, as Scripture says, that the judgments of the Lord "are in all the earth" (I Chronicles 16:14), every event in your life will serve to teach you Divine knowledge.††††† A mind that forgets true knowledge strives for the sake of things antithetical thereto, as though they were profitable for men. When a sinful soul does not accept the afflictions that befall it, then the Angels say of it: "We would have healed Babylon, but it was not healed" (Jeremiah 51:9).

36. The mercy of God is wondrously concealed in involuntary sufferings, drawing to repentance him who patiently endures them and delivering him from eternal chastisement. If it is not easy to find someone who has been pleasing to God without tribulations, then we should thank God for all that happens to us. If Peter had not failed to catch fish by night, he would not have succeeded in catching fish by day (St. Luke 5:5). If Paul had not been physically blinded, he would not subsequently have gained his spiritual vision (Acts 9:8). And if Stephen had not been

slandered as a blasphemer (Acts 6:13), he would not have beheld God when the Heavens were opened to him (Acts 7:56).

37. Just as work for God's sake is called virtue, so also an unexpected affliction is called a test. God tested Abraham; that is, He afflicted him for his benefit, not in order to find out what kind of man he was—for He Who knows all things before they come to pass knew him full well—but in order to provide him with opportunities to perfect his faith.

38. Every affliction proves the inclination of one's will, whether it inclines to the right or to the left; for this reason, an affliction that befalls us is called a test, because the one who experiences it‡ is granted insight into his secret desires.

B. From St. Isaac the Syrian

1. One of the Saints said that a monk who does not serve the Lord in a God-pleasing manner and who does not strive zealously for the salvation of his soul, but is negligent in practicing the virtues, will assuredly be permitted by God to fall into various temptations and infirmities, lest from his great indolence he incline to wickedness; for this reason, God inflicts temptations upon the slothful and negligent, so that they might be preoccupied by these and not by vain things.

2. Remember God at all times and you will not fear temptations. Your nature has become receptive to passions.‡‡ The temptations of the present world are many, and evils are not far removed from you but well up inside you and under your feet. Do not move from the place where you are standing, and when God visits you and looks favorably on you, He will free you from them and grant you relief.

3. As close as the eyelids come to one another, equally close are temptations to men. God has ordained this in His wisdom for your benefit, so that you might persist in knocking at His door and so that, through fear of afflictions, remembrance of Him might be sown in your mind. In this way, you will draw near to Him through your entreaties, your heart will be sanctified by constant remembrance of Him, and when you pray He will hearken to you. You will then understand that it is God Who delivers you from temptations, and you will perceive Him Who fashioned you, strengthens you, and protects you.

C. From St. Maximos

1. The afflictions that befall us occur for our chastening—either for the annulment of past sins, or for the correction of present negligence, or for the prevention of future sins.

2. He who reckons that tribulation has befallen him for one of these reasons does not become angry when he is beaten, when he is wronged, or when he suffers any other affliction. Indeed, being conscious of his own sinfulness, he does not blame the person through whom the tribulation comes, for whether through him or through someone else, he would surely have had to drink the cup of Divine judgments. Rather, he looks to God and gives thanks to Him for permitting tribulation to befall him. He blames himself and accepts correction eagerly, as David did in the case of Semeï.

3. The foolish man frequently asks God to show mercy to him and deliver him from difficulties; but when mercy comes, he does not accept it, since it did not come as he wished, but as the Physician of souls saw fit. For this reason, he becomes heedless and agitated, at times lashing out at men and at times blaspheming against God. Moreover, by displaying ingratitude, he does not receive the consolation that comes from God.

4. Those who tempt us by God's leave either inflame the appetitive faculty of the soul, or stir up its incensive faculty, or impede the functioning of its rational faculty, or beset the body with pains, or snatch away what is essential for the maintenance of our bodies. The demons either tempt us themselves or arm against us those who have no fear of God: they do so themselves when we isolate ourselves from other people, as they tempted the Lord in the wilderness (St. Matthew 4:3-10); they do so through people when we spend time with others, as they tempted the Lord through the Pharisees.

5. But let us look to Him Who is our model and repel the demons on both fronts. Practically every sin is committed for the sake of pleasure, and every sin is blotted out through hardship and distress, either voluntarily by repentance or by Divine Œconomy, through some tribulation brought on in accordance with God's Providence: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we

are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Corinthians 11:31-32).

6. Some temptations bring men pleasure, others bring them distress, and still others bring them physical pain; for the Physician of souls applies the appropriate remedy through His judgments according to the cause of passions that lie within the soul.

7. When a temptation comes upon you unexpectedly, do not blame the person through whom it came, but seek the reason for it and, when you discover it, correct yourself. For the sensible man, taking into account the healing power of God's judgments, gratefully bears the misfortunes that come upon him thereby, not reckoning anything other than his own sins to be the cause thereof.

8. When the foolish man, ignorant of the most wise Providence of God, sins and is chastised for it, he considers either God or men to be the cause of his own woes. The man who desires to be saved is precisely he who does not resist therapeutic remedies. These remedies are pains and sorrows, brought on through a variety of misfortunes. The man who resists them knows neither what his purpose is in the present life nor what benefits he will enjoy when he departs from this world.‡‡‡

9. When in the path of your life you find unchanging peace, then be afraid, because you are far from the straight path trodden by the weary feet of the Saints. For the more you travel on the royal path and draw near to the City of God, the stronger are the temptations that you encounter. The more you progress, the more you find temptations multiplying against you. When, therefore, you perceive in your soul mightier foes—namely temptations—fighting against you, then know that you have received greater strength from Divine Grace and that yet another degree of progress towards higher things has been added to you. For God permits temptations to be brought upon you according to the Grace given to you.‡‡‡‡

10. Temptation does not come unless the soul has first attained to a higher spiritual state than normal and received an increase of Grace. This is confirmed by the Lord, Who was tempted after His Baptism (St. Matthew 4:3-10), and by the Apostles, who were permitted to enter into temptations only after receiving the Comforter. It is appropriate that

those who partake of good things should undergo temptations for the sake thereof; for without affliction, no one is given what is good.

11. Grace, therefore, precedes temptation in the mind, strengthening it and arming it like a soldier in war. After the temptation has passed, and the soul has overcome it, its senses then taste of Grace and take delight in the peace afforded thereby.

12. If someone is weak or, rather, fainthearted and apathetic, and does not wish to be tested for his own good, he has only to beseech God about this, and his request will be heard. Know, however, that insofar as a man is incapable of facing great trials, to the same extent he is also incapable of enjoying great spiritual gifts; and just as he is protected from an onslaught of great temptations, so also is he prevented from receiving great spiritual gifts.

13. I am not speaking of worldly temptations, which come about for the bridling of vice, nor of bodily perturbations, but of those that are appropriate to Hesychasts, in whose case the soul of the ascetic struggler is tested through trials and makes progress according to God. For example, he faces such temptations as sluggishness, physical exhaustion, enervation of the limbs, listlessness, confusion of the intellect, hypochondria, temporary despair, darkening of the thoughts, privation of human help, shortage of bodily necessities, and the like.

14. It behooves us, when we are vexed by such trials, to experience two mutually contradictory feelings; *viz.*, joy and fear: joy, because we find ourselves walking along the road that Christ traversed, as indicated by the trials that we suffer, and fear that we are perhaps undergoing these trials, not because we are making progress in the things of God, but on account of our pride. However, Grace gives wisdom to the humble-minded and grants them to discern and know which trials are brought upon a man in chastisement and reproof for his pride and which trials are blows inflicted by Divine love, in order that he might grow in goodness and be vouchsafed greater Grace.

15. From the second kind of trials a man acquires steadfast hope in God and ceases to trust in anyone else.‡‡‡‡‡ He also acquires a heart that is humble and dead to everything in the world and, in addition to this, through such trials attains to longing and love for his Creator. Con-

solation is concealed in these misfortunes, and so affliction does not last for a long time, just as darkness is followed by light and spiritual warfare is alleviated by Divine help.

16. The temptations that befall a man, by God's leave, because his heart is puffed up (that is, on account of a man's pride), weigh very heavily on his soul and throw it into perplexity, imposing on it a burden beyond its strength to bear, inciting it to blasphemy or some other sin and oppressing it either through passions of the soul that suddenly rise up against a man and violently assault him or through bodily pains and maladies or afflictions caused by other men. Or a man is assailed through some other mishap, such as falling from a height and shattering his body or being shipwrecked in heavy seas and thus, in addition to losing his personal property, even risking his very life. To put it simply, whatever exceeds his strength is visited on such a man, and he does not quickly find help amid such tribulations.

17. These things are brought upon a man by God's permission on account of his pride. You can therefore understand your thought processes and your way of life by comparing the character and magnitude of any given temptation with what you are capable of enduring.◊

18. One should also know this: that when God wills that a man suffer yet more affliction, He allows him to fall into the clutches of faintheartedness, in which listlessness takes hold of him and makes him feel as if his soul is being suffocated—that is, he is given a foretaste of the torments of Hell. Thereafter, he is assailed by spiritual derangement, from which there gush forth innumerable temptations: confusion, anger, blasphemy, complaining, perverted thoughts, wandering from place to place, and the like.

19. For all of these evils there is only one cure whereby the soul can find consolation: humility of heart, which derives from prayer and the shedding of tears, from prostrating oneself before God, and from self-abasement before men. Without such humility, it is impossible to be delivered from these temptations. For humility gives a man patience, through which the burden of affliction is lightened and consolation ensues; this in turn increases one's love for God and bestows joy and exultation in the Holy Spirit.

D. From St. Barsanouphios

1. A brother asked Elder Barsanouphios: "Scripture says, 'Prove me, O Lord, and try me' (Psalm 25:2); and again, '[C]ount it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (St. James 1:2); and in another place, "[L]ead us not into temptation" (St. Matthew 6:13); and yet again, "[P]ray that ye enter not into temptation" (St. Matthew 26:41). Since these verses appear to contradict one another, I beg you, Father, tell me the difference between the thoughts contained therein."

2. The Elder replied: "Brother, there is one kind of temptation for which we are responsible and there is another kind that occurs by God's permission. The kind for which we are responsible is harmful to the soul, and concerning this the Apostle James exclaimed: 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil' (St. James 1:13), etc.◊◊ The kind that occurs by God's permission is beneficial to the soul, for it occurs to test a man's character, and such testing brings a man to hope, and hope does not put to shame, as it is written.◊◊◊ He who, through hope in God, is not put to shame by temptations has been saved by the power of the Lord.

3. "To say, 'Prove me, O Lord, and try me' is the mark of a man engaged in spiritual struggle, who seeks to be tested through a temptation inflicted by God's leave, in order to determine whether he will preserve patience amid the affliction caused by temptation;◊◊◊◊ for the patience that a man shows amid temptations, as we have said, is the proof of his character, and also confers other goods on him. Herein, in truth, consist both benefit and progress, for the will of a struggler does not coöperate with temptation◊◊◊◊◊ but is, rather, opposed to it; and for this reason, such a man strives not to be overcome by temptation.

4. "The verse, '[L]ead us not into temptation,' means 'Do not allow us to be tempted by our own will and desires'; for such a temptation engenders death, and about this the Savior says: '[P]ray that ye enter not into temptation.'"

E. From St. Ephraim

When the trumpet sounds, an army is made ready for war; but in time of battle, not all prove to be true warriors. Likewise, many monks wear

the *schema*, but few are genuine strugglers. It is at times of temptation that a monk's true mettle is revealed. When it snows, the tracks left by wild animals are followed by hunters, while at the time of temptation, Satan follows the tracks left by a monk.

F. From Abba Isaiah

Brother, expect every day that some temptation will come upon you, be it death, or affliction, or great dangers. Endure these temptations eagerly and without becoming perturbed, reflecting that "we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (*cf.* Acts 14:22).

G. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Anthony said: "No one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless he has undergone temptations."

2. An Elder said: "If we were to cultivate humility, we would not need chastisement; for all of our woes happen to us on account of our arrogance. If a messenger of Satan was given to the Apostle to buffet him, lest he become puffed up (II Corinthians 12:7), how much more will Satan himself be allowed to trample on us, the arrogant ones, until we learn humility."

3. One of the Fathers asked Abba Sisoes: "If I am living in the desert, and a barbarian comes along wishing to slay me, and I overcome him in a fight, should I kill him?" The Elder replied: "No, entrust him to the mercy of God. Whatever temptation comes upon a man, he ought to reflect and say: 'This has happened to me because of my sins.' If, on the other hand, something good happens to him, it is by the good Will of God."

4. One of the Fathers said that unless a tree is shaken by the wind, it neither grows nor puts down roots; so also a monk, unless he is subjected to temptations and endures them patiently, does not become courageous.

5. An Elder said: "Take away temptations, and no one will become a Saint; indeed, he who flees from a beneficial temptation is fleeing from

eternal life."

* Semeï (Shimei) was of the tribe of Benjamin and of the house of Saul, and he dwelled in Baurim. When David passed through that place while fleeing from his son Abessalom (Absalom), who was pursuing him, Semeï came out and insulted David, cursed him, and threw stones at him. The officers accompanying David wanted to slay Semeï there and then, but David deterred them, saying: "Let him curse, for the Lord hath told him. If by any means the Lord may look on mine affliction, thus shall He return me good for his cursing this day" (II Kings 16:11-12). In spite of David's forbearance, Semeï continued running along the side of the mountain, and above the road on which David was fleeing, and threw stones at him. But when David returned victorious after the death of Abessalom, and his retainers sought to kill Semeï, the latter fell at David's feet, begging forgiveness, and David said to him, "Thou shalt not die" (II Kings 19:23), and granted him to live. After the death of David, Solomon put Semeï to death for another transgression (III Kings 3:39-46).

** "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (St. Luke 13:2-5).

*** The seventy-year captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians and their deportation to Babylon took place between the years 606 and 536 B.C. The Jews suffered a crushing defeat and were led captive to Babylon during four successive invasions by Nabuchodonosor. The first invasion occurred in 606 B.C., when Nabuchodonosor, after vanquishing King Joakim (Jehoiakim) of Judah, carried many Jews—among them Daniel and the Three Youths—away to Babylon (IV Kings 24:1; Daniel 1:1-14). The second invasion occurred in the tenth or eleventh year (594 or 593 B.C.) of the reign of the same Joakim (II Chronicles 36:6). The third invasion took place three months after the second, during the reign of Joakim, whom Nabuchodonosor apprehended and abducted along with more than ten thousand Jews (IV Kings 24:10-16). The fourth and final invasion by Nabuchodonosor occurred during the reign of Sedekias (Zedekiah), the last King of Judah, in 588 B.C. (IV Kings 25:1-7). During this invasion, Nabuchodonosor launched a surprise incursion against Jerusalem, took Sedekias captive, slew his sons in front of him, and blinded him. He then burned the Temple to the ground, pillaged and destroyed Jerusalem, and carried the Jews away to Babylon (Jeremiah 52:1-11). The Jews remained there until 536 B.C., when the Lord allowed them to return to Jerusalem.

**** "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

***** We have restored the words, "both our words and," which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*, from the *Patrologia Græca* (Vol. LXV, col. 1097B)—*Trans.*

• St. Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 10:1.

•• St. John 1:29.

••• Reading "ὅσα τοῖς πιστοῖς ἐστι διὰ ἐννοίας" rather than "ὅσα ἐπὶ τῆς πιστῆς ἐστιν ἐννοίας" (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 1100C)—*Editors.*

•••• "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of

bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword...being destitute, afflicted, tormented" (Hebrews 11:36-37).

••••• "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

† "O Lord, in affliction I remembered Thee; Thy chastening was to us with small affliction" (Isaiah 26:16).

†† "[W]e must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

††† There is a variant reading of this verse: "The blameless shall be avenged, but the seed of the ungodly shall be utterly destroyed"—*Trans.*

†††† That is, devote yourself to acquiring the virtues, fulfilling God's commandments, and living the ascetic life, as various translations of this aphorism suggest—*Editors.*

††††† Reading "*θεογνωσίας*" rather than "*θεοσεβείας*" (see *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. I, p. 113)—*Trans.*

‡ Reading "*τῷ μετόχῳ*" rather than "*τῶν μετόχων*" (see *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. I, p. 124)—*Trans.*

‡‡ That is, since the Fall of the first-formed human beings.

‡‡‡ Reading "*ὀνησόμενος*" rather than "*ὠνησόμενος*" (see A. Ceresa-Gastaldo, ed., *Massimo confessore. Capitoli sulla carità* [Rome: Editrice Studium, 1963])—*Editors.*

‡‡‡‡ Sections 9-19 are from St. Isaac the Syrian—*Editors.*

‡‡‡‡‡ "Trust ye not in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation" (Psalm 145:3).

◊ The Modern Greek translation of the *Εὐεργετινός* offers a useful amplification of this sentence: "If the temptation is beyond your capacity, it occurs by Divine leave for your correction; but if it is within your capacity and easy to cope with, then it occurs from Divine love, for the multiplication of the treasures of Grace in you" (*Εὐεργετινός*, Vol. III, p. 424; see endnotes for Hypothesis XXVI , "†," above)—*Editors*

◊◊ "[N]either tempteth He any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (St. James 1:13-15).

◊◊◊ "[W]e glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, character; and character, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed" (Romans 5:3-5).

◊◊◊◊ We have restored the words, "inflicted by God's leave, in order to determine whether he will preserve patience amid the affliction caused by temptation," which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*, from *Βαρσανουφίου καὶ Ἰωάννου Ἐρωταποκρίσεις (ΣΛ'-ΦΚΒ')*, ed. Stavroula Zachariadou (Thessaloniki: Paterikai Ekdoseis "Gregorios ho Palamas," 1988), pp. 290-292—*Trans.*

◊◊◊◊◊ Reading "οὐ συνεργεῖ γὰρ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ ἀγωνιζομένου" rather than "οὐ συνεργεῖ γὰρ τῷ θελήματι τοῦ ἀγωνιζομένου" (*ibid.*, p. 292)—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XXXIV

How we should withstand temptations; that we should not expose ourselves to them; those circumstances in which we should avoid or endure a temptation.

A. From the Life of St. John the Merciful

1. During the Patriarchate of St. John the Merciful, thirteen ships, belonging to the Church of Alexandria and laden with wheat and other goods, were on their way to Alexandria. They ran into a severe storm in the Adriatic Sea, on account of which they were in danger of being shipwrecked. All of their cargo, worth 3,300 pounds of gold, was thrown into the sea.

2. The shipmasters took their now empty vessels to anchor in the harbor of Alexandria and, in fear of being punished by the Patriarch, took sanctuary in the Church. When St. John was informed of what had occurred, he was not in the least perturbed, but gave thanks to God even for such a mishap as this and sent the sailors a letter of forgiveness, absolving them of any liability for the lost goods. This letter contained only the following words: "'The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away' (Job 1:21), brethren; come, therefore, and do not fear any danger on account of this disaster, for the Lord will provide for the morrow."

3. When a multitude of the citizens came to the Patriarchate to comfort him over this great catastrophe, the Holy Patriarch forestalled them, saying: "It does not in any way behoove us to be downcast over the misadventure of the ships, for which I alone am responsible; this disaster would not have happened, if I had not been overcome by high-mindedness at the thought of distributing the goods of others; or rather, the goods bestowed by God. No doubt God, in His desire to curb my haughtiness, permitted such a calamity to occur. Almsgiving frequently becomes the cause of high-mindedness for one who is heedless, whereas 'poverty,' as it is written, 'humbleth a man' (Proverbs 10:4).

4. "Therefore, I am to blame for two evils: on the one hand, that I

have been deprived of the reward of almsgiving through vainglory and, on the other hand, that on account of this passion, I have become responsible for the loss of so much money. And now I bring upon myself all the misfortune of those souls afflicted by hunger. However, even if not for my sake, yet in His loving care for the unfortunate, God will provide for their needs. For He it is Who said, 'neither will I by any means forsake thee, nor will I desert thee' (*cf.* Deuteronomy 31:6), and faithful is He Who made such a promise."

5. Thus, those who had faithfully come to console the Holy Patriarch departed, having themselves been consoled by him. Moreover, the Saint's profound trust in God was soon rewarded. Not much time passed before God doubled the assets of this new Job, so that he was even more generous to the needy and gave them even more money than before.

B. From the Life of St. Pachomios

1. There was once a certain brother living alone in asceticism, who was from an eminent family in the region. When he heard about the way of life led by St. Pachomios, he went and asked to be received into his *cœnobion*. He was duly received into the *cœnobion*, where he stayed peacefully for several days. After a short time, the aforesaid monk began to yearn for martyrdom, even though there was peace in the world and the Church, by the Grace of God, enjoyed tranquillity and was making good progress, since St. Constantine was Emperor at that time.

2. Under the sway of this desire, the monk continually implored the Blessed Pachomios, saying: "Abba, pray for me that I might become a Martyr." The Elder, clairvoyant as he was, counseled him not to persist in this thought. "Brother," he told him, "endure the struggle of monastic life valiantly and irreproachably, living your life in a manner pleasing to Christ, and you will surely enjoy the fellowship of the Holy Martyrs in Heaven, since the monastic life is a voluntary martyrdom. Be careful not to allow your heart to be obsessed by this thought."

3. However, in spite of all the advice that he received from St. Pachomios, the monk did not let the matter drop, but intensified his yearning each day and pestered the Elder to pray for his martyrdom. In order to shake off this vexation, and fearing the responsibility that he would

incur if he were to beseech God for such a thing, St. Pachomios said to the monk: "I will pray for this, because it is what you want; if you long for martyrdom, it will find you. But be careful lest, when the time comes, instead of suffering martyrdom for Christ, you deny Him. For he who seeks martyrdom according to his own will and exposes himself to danger unnecessarily is truly in error, since our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to pray that we should not fall into temptation: 'And lead us not into temptation' (St. Matthew 6:13)."

4. Two years later, the great Pachomios sent some of the brothers of the *cœnobion* to a village situated above the monastery to gather the rushes that they used for weaving mats. But certain barbarians, called Blemmyes, were approaching the village in which the brothers were gathering rushes. The blessed Pachomios sent the monk who longed for martyrdom to these brothers to take them a few provisions, after first advising him to keep watch over himself. At the same time, as if foreseeing what was going to happen, he reminded him of the following Scriptural verses: "[B]ehold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2); and, "[g]iving no offense in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed" (II Corinthians 6:3). Through these verses St. Pachomios hinted at what would befall him on the way.

5. The monk loaded the provisions on a donkey and made his way towards where the brothers were. While he was passing close by the desert, he ran into the barbarians, who had descended from the adjacent mountain to fetch water. They immediately captured him, bound his hands, seized the ass along with its burden, and led him up to the mountain to the other barbarians.

6. When the others saw the monk coming, they began to mock him and say to him scornfully: "Come here, monk, and worship our idols!" In the meantime, they slaughtered animals in sacrifice and offered libations to their gods. After bringing the monk into their midst, they forced him to offer a libation with them. When he refused to do so, the barbarians approached him in a rage, brandishing their bared swords above his head, and told him: "If you are not willing to sacrifice to our gods, we will slay you at once with our swords."

7. When the monk, who before had so insistently sought martyrdom, saw their ferocious appearance and their bared swords, he became

frightened, offered libations to their idols, and joined them in eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols. Thus, fearing bodily death, he suffered spiritual death by denying Christ the Master.

8. After that, the barbarians released him and he descended from the mountain. Finding himself alone, he began to come to his senses, and only then did he realize the magnitude of the iniquity—or, rather, the impiety—that he had committed. Beset by sorrow, he rent his garments and smote his face many times, and then returned to the *cœnobion.*

9. When the Blessed Pachomios was informed of what had occurred, he went outside the monastery in great distress to meet the monk. When the monk saw the Elder coming towards him, he fell down and cried out in tears and lamentation: "I have sinned, Father, before God and before you, because I did not listen to your good advice. If I had listened to you, I would not have undergone these frightful sufferings." The great Pachomios replied to him: "Arise, unhappy man. You have cut yourself off, poor wretch, from so many good things; indeed, you have recklessly cast away the crown of martyrdom that the Angels were preparing to place upon your head.

10. "Christ the Master Himself was present with His Holy Angels at your ordeal. He willed to place a victor's diadem upon your head, and you denied Him in a single moment of time. Fearing bodily death, which you will unfailingly undergo, and contrary to your will, you have fallen away from your God and forfeited eternal life. Where are your previous words? What happened to your yen for martyrdom?"

11. To these reproofs from St. Pachomios, the fallen monk replied with contrition and grief: "I have sinned, my Father, in every way, and no longer have the strength to raise my face heavenwards. I am lost, Father; I no longer have the capacity to repent. What am I to do, Father? I did not expect that things would turn out this way."

12. This and more did the fallen monk say, bitterly lamenting. Resuming their conversation, the great Pachomios said to him: "You hapless man, through this denial of yours you have completely alienated yourself from the Lord. Nevertheless, God is good, and never during this present life is His righteous wrath transformed into vengeance; for His Will is full of compassion, and when we repent, He takes away our

sins. He wishes not the death of a sinner, but his repentance; nor does He desire that one who has fallen should remain in his sin, but that he should get up. Hence, do not despair of yourself, since there is always hope for salvation. As Holy Scripture says, if a tree is cut down, there is hope that it will sprout again.* If, then, you are willing to listen to whatever I tell you and apply it diligently, you will receive forgiveness from God."

13. The fallen monk replied, shedding bitter tears: "From now on, Father, I will carry out everything you tell me." "Depart from here," St. Pachomios ordered him, "and enclose yourself in a quiet cell. Until your death, do not have contact with anyone. Every day eat only bread and salt and drink nothing but water. And whereas each of the other brothers, in accordance with the *Typikon*, makes one mat per day, you should make two. Keep vigil and pray as much as you can. Never desist from bemoaning your fall."

14. The monk eagerly accepted these injunctions and departed as he was ordered. So great was his enthusiasm that he doubled the rule that had been imposed on him. For the rest of his life, he had no contact with anyone other than St. Pachomios, Theodore, and a few of the other Elders. After he had spent ten whole years struggling in this way, he came to a good end by the Grace of the Lord. The great Pachomios himself attested that the monk's soul was at peace, since he had received forgiveness for his denial of Christ.

C. From St. Barsanouphios

1. There were certain brothers living at a monastery who had been delivered by the prayers of the Holy Fathers from many temptations. After hearing that brigands were about to attack the monastery, these brothers decided to depart and asked the Elder what they should do.

2. The Elder replied to them as follows: "We already have personal experience of the goodness of our Master, because He has delivered us from many afflictions and temptations. For this reason, let us not be in any doubt, even now, that He will protect and preserve us from every evil. Therefore, we will cast all of our care upon the Lord (*cf.* Psalm 54:23) and commit all of our hope to Him. By the prayers of the Holy Fathers, do not be concerned about any evil, but stand firm in the Faith of

Christ, chanting with the Prophet David, 'The Lord is my help, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me' (Psalm 117:6), and the rest of the verses of this Psalm, and also these verses: 'The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; the Lord shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy coming in and thy going out, from this time forth, and for evermore' (Psalm 120:7-8).

3. "Beware lest people learn that, although you have God as your protector, you fear men, for they will assuredly be scandalized by this. Chant to God every day: 'Yea, though I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me' (Psalm 22:4). How, indeed, can we truly utter these words with our lips, while our soul is afraid? When our soul is lacking in faith, say to it, by way of encouragement: 'The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our helper' (Psalm 45:8)."

4. When one of the brothers heard this response, he posed the following question to the same Elder: "Please explain to me: ought one live without fear in places full of brigands when he is confident that God protects him?"

5. The Elder replied: "We ought always to have confidence in the Lord, that He will not allow us to be tried beyond our capacity (*cf.* I Corinthians 10:13). But since He Himself taught us to pray that we not enter into temptation—'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation' (St. Matthew 26:41)—we must not expose ourselves to the risk of death, for we violate the aforementioned commandment of God by willfully courting disaster.** If, however, we dwell in a peaceful place, and we suddenly hear that there is going to be an onslaught of brigands, we should not be perturbed, since we are under the protection of God; for in that case, God sees that we have not willfully thrown ourselves into temptations.

6. "If, therefore, temptation comes upon us—be it an attack of brigands or anything else—at a time we are not expecting it, and we pray, in accordance with the Lord's commandment, that we not enter into temptation, let us not go to pieces. Temptations occur by God's permission, for our benefit, so that our faith might be tested. And insofar as these things happen by God's leave, our faith and hope in God are confirmed by the teaching of the Apostle: 'God is faithful, Who will not suf-

fer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it' (I Corinthians 10:13).

7. "For, if we flee from one place to another because we hear rumors of danger, then the Devil will surely not leave us in peace in any place. However, when we ascertain that danger lurks in a particular place, then we should take timely measures to safeguard ourselves. But if the place in which we live is peaceful, and temptation appears completely out of the blue, in the form of a sudden attack by brigands, then God, Who sees that the danger is not due to our lack of foresight, will protect us in accordance with His Will.

8. "Just as one assays the quality of gold or silver in a furnace, so also the souls of men are tested through temptations. Before you set out to endure temptation, therefore, do not overestimate your strength; when temptation does come, you will thus realize what you are capable of enduring. If, at the moment of temptation, you see yourself falling, call at once on the help of God and the Lord will assuredly deliver you. Resist sin steadfastly and do not fear the presence of temptation. A brave athlete is not harmed by taking part in a contest; on the contrary, this very experience renders him more proven.

9. "Objects that are made durable through fire are often fire-resistant. For example, brick, when unbaked, does not hold up and is easily broken; but when placed in a fire and thoroughly baked, then it is transformed into a wall that obstructs and repels the force of fire. The furnace itself is made of bricks; and yet, it effectively contains the fire and does not allow it to be dispersed hither and thither, in just the same way that a jar contains the water with which it has been filled.

10. "As for you, my brother, resist temptations and afflictions, calling upon Divine assistance. Be assured that in this way you will become more proven and more courageous. For 'tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience' (Romans 5:3-4), and so forth.

11. "When an affliction befalls you, do not be dejected, but wait patiently, for joy will soon enter your soul. Take comfort from the expectation and hope of joy to come. Learn from the example of sailors: whenever they run into severe weather and heavy seas, they do not de-

spair of their salvation. On the contrary, they do battle with the waves, awaiting calm weather. Emboldened by this hope, they pass through the storm.

12. "When tranquillity prevails again, they do not relax their vigilance. They await the next storm; and for this reason, they secure the ship on all sides and remain constantly alert, lest they find themselves unprepared and place their lives in jeopardy.

13. "Thus, when you undergo afflictions, expect that relief will come, so that you might endure temptations bravely and shun despair, which is so harmful to the soul. When the anticipated joy returns to your soul, beware lest you become completely captivated by it and allow your mind to become dispersed amid life's pleasures, thereby forgetting the beneficial mourning enjoined by Christ.*** On the contrary, you should restrain yourself, in the expectation that sorrow will come. When it does come, since you are prepared for it, you will not be taken by surprise, but will valiantly endure what you have been expecting. This is the meaning of the verse: 'I made ready, and I was not troubled' (Psalm 118:60)."

D. From St. Isaiah

If you feel gratitude during a time of temptation, you can avert the temptations that come upon you.

E. From Abba Mark

1. He who wishes to overcome temptations without prayer and patient endurance will not succeed in driving them away, but will, in fact, become more entangled in them.

2. In a time of affliction, have before your eyes the approach of spiritual pleasure; for, since the expectation of pleasure assuages affliction, one readily accepts the latter.

3. He who accepts present afflictions in the expectation**** of future good things has found the knowledge of the truth and will easily be delivered from wrath and sorrow.

4. He who wishes to avert the onset of every evil ought to reconcile his affairs to God through prayer; in his mind he should maintain hope in God, while disregarding, as far as possible, all concern for sensory things.

5. When a temptation comes upon you, do not seek to discover why, how, or from whom it came, but how you might endure it without feeling sorrow or resentment.

6. An evil deed committed by someone else does not add to our sins, unless we embrace it with evil thoughts (thereby filling our souls with the stench of other people's wickedness).

7. When you are wronged, and your inward feelings and your heart become hardened, do not be distressed, for this has happened to you by Divine Providence. On the contrary, rejoice and cut off the thoughts that rise up against you, knowing that as long as thoughts are destroyed when they are still merely suggestions, the evil that they might have engendered is destroyed along with them. But when thoughts linger, the evil is also liable to increase.

F. From Abba Isaac

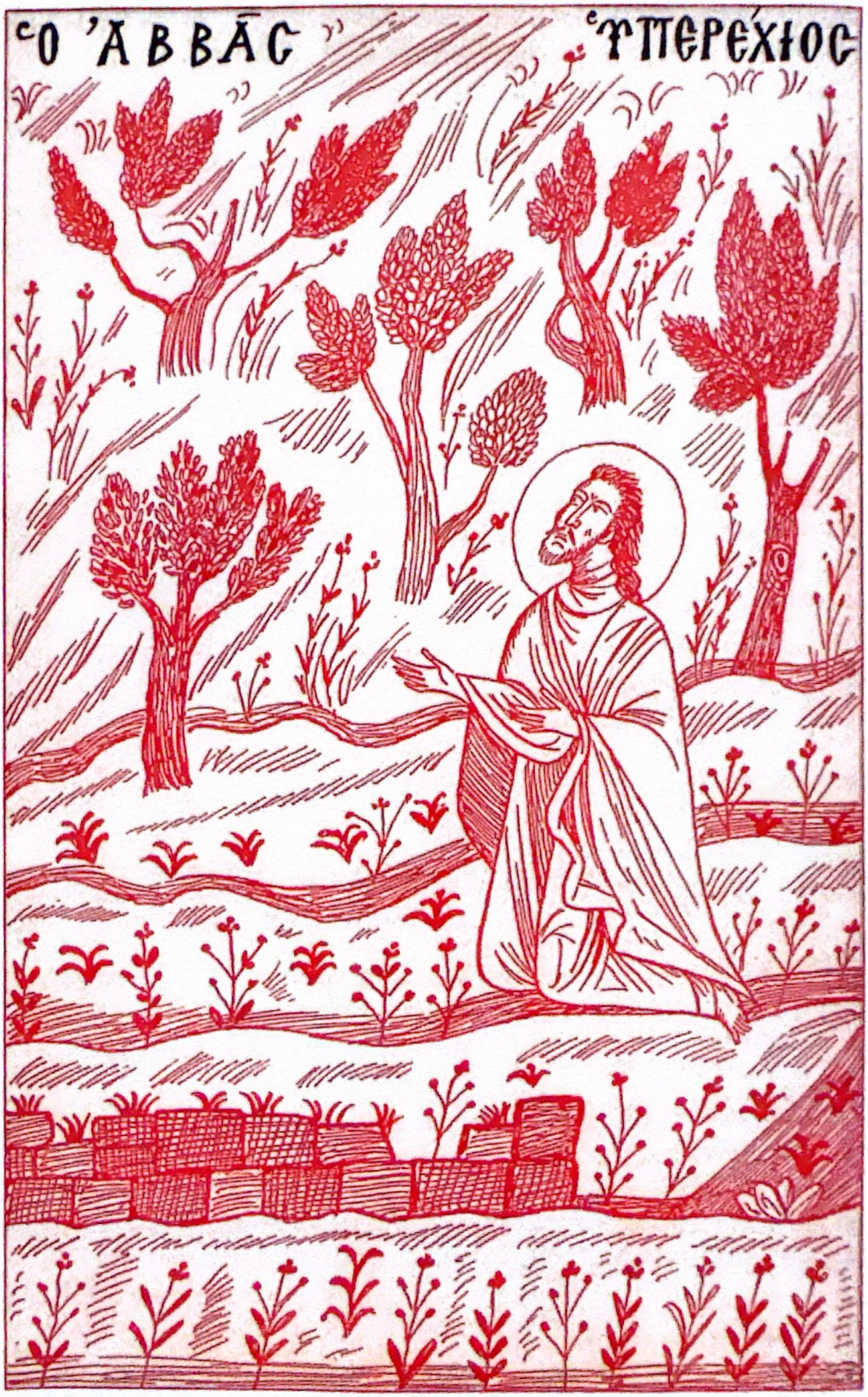
1. Remember God at all times, and He, too, will remember you when you fall into evils.

2. Seek allies before waging war and summon a doctor before you become ill; pray to God before afflictions visit you, and while you are undergoing them you will find Him to be an invincible helper.

3. The Ark of Noah was constructed during a time of peace. The trees that provided the timber for the construction had been planted a hundred years previously. But when the wrath of God erupted in the form of the Flood, the unrighteous perished, while the Ark served as a shelter for the righteous Noah.

G. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Hyperechios said: "Let a spiritual hymn always be on your lips and let meditation on spiritual topics lighten the burden of the



Abba Hyperechios

temptations that come upon you. A clear example of this was the wayfarer who was heavy-laden and who began to sing in order to dispel the toil of the journey."

2. An Elder said: "When temptation comes upon a man, his afflictions are increased [by the Evil One] from every side, so that he might become fainthearted and murmur against God." In order to illustrate this point, he recounted the following incident.

"There was a brother who lived in the Cells. A certain temptation befell him. In the midst of this, he also had to endure the uncharitable behavior of the other monks. When they saw this brother, they avoided greeting him or inviting him into their cells. When the brother was in need of bread, no one took pity on him by lending him some. Even when he entered the Church, no one encouraged him to join them for the *agape* meal, as is customary for monks. On one occasion, in fact, on returning to his cell from the harvest, he had neither bread nor anything else to eat, since no one bothered to offer him anything. And yet, this brother did not grow fainthearted, nor did he grumble, but endured everything bravely, giving thanks to God.

3. "God, seeing his patience, delivered him from this warfare of temptation. At once there came a pilgrim from Egypt, leading a camel laden with loaves of bread. He deposited the loaves at the monk's cell and departed. Moved by this miracle, the monk began to weep and say to God: 'O Lord, did I not deserve to suffer a little affliction for Thy Name's sake?' Thereupon, the other brethren invited him into their cells and gave him hospitality."

4. A certain Elder left his cell in order to sell his handiwork, which consisted of wicker baskets. A demon met him on the road, snatched the baskets from him, and made them vanish. The Elder immediately turned to prayer, saying: "O my God, I thank Thee, because Thou hast freed me from the labor of carrying them to the city and selling them." The demon could not endure the Elder's gratitude to God. For this reason, he cried out: "Here, take back your baskets, you evil Elder!" The Elder then took the handiwork and sold it.

5. One of the Elders said, concerning Lazarus the pauper (St. Luke 16:19-31): "Brethren, we find Lazarus doing no other good than never murmuring against God for not showing mercy to him. On the contrary,

he bore his misery with thanksgiving and did not condemn the rich man for his callousness; and for this forbearance on his part, God received Lazarus into Paradise."

6. A monk who is ready to endure bravely whatever may happen to him will experience only a certain degree of distress at the time of temptation; one who does not anticipate that he will ever encounter temptation will suffer far more from unexpected afflictions.

7. When a fire breaks out, fire-engines are brought in to extinguish it; when a temptation arises, it is the tears of the one being tempted that extinguish it.

8. Water extinguishes a flame that has been kindled in a house; tearful prayer extinguishes evil desires.

* "For there is hope for a tree, even if it should be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the branch thereof will not fail" (Job 14:7).

** The phrase "we must not expose ourselves to the risk of death, for we violate the aforementioned commandment of God by willfully courting disaster" might also be rendered: "we must not throw ourselves into temptations (this is a violation of God's commandment, for it means handing ourselves over to death), but must safeguard ourselves" (see *Βαρσανουφίου καὶ Ἰωάννου Ἐρωταποκρίσεις [ΣΛ'-ΦΚΒ']*, ed. Stavroula Zachariadou [Thessaloniki: Paterikai Ekdoseis "Gregorios ho Palamas," 1988], p. 288)—*Trans.*

*** "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (St. Matthew 5:4).

**** We have restored the word "expectation"—missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from the *Φιλοκαλία* (Athens: Ekdotikos Oikos "Aster," 197), Vol. I, p. 106—*Editors.*

Hypothesis XXXV

That one who is able to work miracles should not have recourse to miracle-working, but decline it out of humility; likewise, that we should not aspire to, or ask for, other spiritual gifts. That, even if we are vouchsafed them, we should not be high-minded, but guard ourselves through humility; that those who exhibit a Godly way of life are in no way inferior to those who work miracles; and that there are other spiritual gifts, superior to that of miracle-working, whereby spiritual men are known.

A. From St. Gregory the Dialogist

1. You ask me, Peter, whether in our age it is possible to find men of such virtue and boldness before God as our wonder-working Fathers. I do not doubt that, even now, there exist in the world many such people, who are equal to those great Fathers. For even if they do not work such miracles as the Saints of old, this does not mean that we should not esteem the former as much as we do the latter. The proof of a Godly manner of life resides in the power of good deeds, and not just in miracles. As you well know, the Apostle Paul is a brother equal in Apostolic dignity to Peter the Chief Apostle, even though Peter walked on the sea with his feet, whereas Paul experienced shipwreck. In terms of miracle-working, then, the power of these two Apostles was not the same; but in Heaven, they both have the same dignity.

Peter

2. Indeed, what you say is true. Of all miracles I reckon the most amazing to be the raising of a man who is already dead and his restoration to the present life.

Gregory

3. Peter, if we focus our attention only on what we see, we will of necessity believe that the resurrection of a dead man is the greatest of all miracles. But if we rise above what is visible and ponder on what is in-

visible, then we shall see how wondrously it is proved that it is a greater miracle to convert a sinner by preaching the word of God and by consoling him with prayer* than to resurrect one who is physically dead.** For, in the former case, the flesh, which will die again, returns to life, whereas, in the latter case, the soul is raised from the death of sin in order to live forever.

4. I will set before you two persons, so that you might thereby understand which of the two miracles in question is the more powerful. These two persons are Lazarus, whom the Lord raised physically from the dead, and Saul, whom He raised noetically from error. There is, however, no record of the miracles that Lazarus worked after his resurrection from the dead.

5. By contrast, our minds cannot grasp how many miracles Paul accomplished by the power of his sanctified speech, after the resurrection of his soul from sin! It is, indeed, worthy of astonishment how those cruel thoughts which he had before he was reborn in Christ were transformed into tender feelings of love and piety; how, whereas he had previously rejoiced in the death of Christians, he himself subsequently longed to die for those whom he regarded as brothers; how, whereas he had a complete mastery of Holy Scripture, he nonetheless judged that he knew nothing "save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2). It is also remarkable how, although he was so highly exalted in honor among the Apostles, he disparaged himself as least among the Disciples, and how, although he had raised the eye of his mind to the third Heaven, he so compassionately condescended to human weakness as to prescribe rules for conjugal relations. Is it not amazing that he who associated noetically with the companies of Angels did not decline to show concern for and administer the affairs of those living in the world, he who later rejoiced in the torments that he underwent and gloried in his infirmities—for, as he said, the reason for his life was Christ***—and who succeeded in living beyond the limits of fleshly life while still wearing flesh?

6. Behold how he lived when he returned from the spiritual Hades in which his mind had been immured to a life of compassion and love. That one should raise someone bodily from the dead is much less significant than this miracle involving the Apostle Paul, unless perhaps**** through the vivification of the flesh the mind of him who is raised is

also vivified—in which case he is vivified internally through the external miracle of the resurrection of the body.

Peter

7. I understand perfectly how much greater a miracle it is for a soul to return from sin and error than for a dead man to be resurrected.

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. St. Anthony the Great used to say: "One should not boast about casting out demons or be puffed up because he works miraculous cures, nor should we marvel at one who casts out a demon, while disparaging one who does not. Let him who wishes to benefit spiritually seek to learn the ascetic discipline of each and either emulate it, yearn to acquire it, or correct himself in the light of it. To perform miracles does not belong to us, but is the work of the Savior; for He said to His Disciples: '[R]ejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven' (St. Luke 10:20).

2. "For the fact that our names are written in Heaven attests to our virtuous life; but to cast out demons is a gift of the Savior Who grants it. Therefore, to those who boasted, not about their virtue, but about the miracles that they worked, and who said, 'Lord, in Thy name have we not cast out demons, and in Thy Name done many mighty works?' (St. Matthew 7:22), He answered, 'Verily I say unto you, I know you not' (St. Matthew 25:12). For the Lord does not know the ways of the ungodly. None of us is judged because he did not cast out demons, or because he did not have foreknowledge; rather, each will be judged as to whether he has kept the Faith and truly observed the commandments.

3. "Therefore, we should not set much store by these things or labor to acquire them. We should strive, instead, to please God through our good way of life and pray that the Lord might be our fellow-helper in winning the victory over the Devil."*****

4. One night, when St. Palamon and his disciple Pachomios were keeping vigil, having previously lit a fire, a certain brother, who had come from elsewhere to stay with them, got up and said to Palamon: "If anyone among us has faith, let him stand on these coals and repeat

word for word the relevant verse of the Gospel."• Realizing that the visiting monk had said this out of pride, the Elder rebuked him, telling him: "Desist from this foolishness of yours, brother, and do not say such things, for you are deluded." But the brother, still more blinded by pride, stepped onto the coals, even though no one had bidden him to do so. By God's leave, and with coöperation from the demons, he suffered no burns at all. This fact increased his foolishness; for, as Scripture says, "To the crooked God will send crooked ways" (Proverbs 21:8).

5. Then, as he was about to leave Abba Palamon's cell, as if to chide them he said: "So where is *your* faith?" As soon as the demon saw that the brother had been completely deceived and would readily obey him, he transformed himself into a beautiful woman clad in splendid garments. He went to him in this guise and, standing outside his cell, knocked on the door. When the brother opened the door, the demon said to him: "I am being hounded by my creditors and I am afraid that they are going to do me some harm, since I cannot pay my debts. I implore you to receive me into your cell, for God has sent me to you for my salvation."

6. And the brother, unable, owing to his mental blindness, to discern who it was that was talking to him, received "her" into his cell. When the demon discerned that he was inclined towards vice, he sowed shameful lust in his soul, so that, overcome by the thought of fornication, he resolved to commit the sin. When he approached "her," the demon, showing his true colors, immediately dashed him to the ground, where he remained prostrate and speechless, as though he were a corpse.

7. Several days later, realizing how foolish he had been, he went to St. Palamon and said to him tearfully: "I know that I am the cause of my own undoing; for you gave me much advice, Father, and I did not listen to you. Therefore, I beseech you to help me by your holy prayers, wretch that I am, for I am in danger of being destroyed by this demon."

8. While he was still speaking, and Abba Palamon and Pachomios were weeping over him out of sympathy, he was suddenly possessed by the unclean demon and leapt out of the Elder's cell. Driven on by the demon, he ran over the mountain and reached a city called Panos. There, the demon subsequently threw him into the furnace of a bath-

house where he was immediately burnt alive and perished.

9. Certain heretical ascetics once visited the monastery directed by St. Pachomios, hiding their inner wolf under garments of coarse hair. Standing at the gatehouse, they told the brethren who were there: "We have been sent by our own Father to the great Elder Pachomios. Go into the monastery, therefore, and say to him: 'If you are truly a man of God and are confident that God listens to you, come with us and let us cross this river on foot, walking on the surface of the waters, so that all might know which of us possesses greater boldness before God.'"

10. When the brothers reported these words to Pachomios, he replied to them in indignation: "Tell me, did you actually consent to listen to these men? Have you not yet learned that such suggestions have nothing to do with God and are totally alien, not only to our monastic life, but also to sensible lay people who are true Christians? What law allows us to suggest such ideas and to perform such deeds? Indeed, what worse state could there be than this kind of foolishness? That is, that I should cease mourning for my sins and from being concerned, as I ought, about avoiding eternal punishment and occupy myself, like a small child, with such inanities?"

11. The brothers replied to him: "How could these men, being heretics and enemies of God, have dared to challenge you to such a miraculous feat?" St. Pachomios responded to them: "Why, this suggestion is typical of heretics. Have you not read the Apostolic dictum that says: '[A]fter their hardness and impenitent heart God gave them over to a reprobate mind' (Romans 2:5; 1:28)? By God's consent, these men would perhaps have been able to cross the river as if it were dry land, because the Devil would have coöperated with them in order to validate their ungodly heresy in the eyes of those who place their trust in him, and, by the performance of this miracle, to reassure those whom he had already deceived. As for me, I have no need of such prodigies in order to believe.

12. "Go out and tell them that this is what the servant of God Pachomios has to say to them: 'My struggle and my whole purpose in life is not to cross a river dryshod, to fly over mountains, or to give orders to wild beasts, but to understand the Will of God and to overcome the wiles of the Devil by the power of the Lord, Who commanded us to

"tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy" (St. Luke 10:19). When the Lord has granted me these things, all the rest will assuredly follow.'"

13. Having said these things, he exhorted the brothers not to become prideful over their own achievements or to be frightened by any visions, or to tempt God through such foolish requests,•• because many are the wiles of the adversary and because all such things are superfluous and dangerous for a man. For, as the Savior said to the Enemy: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (St. Matthew 4:7; St. Luke 4:12).•••

14. Brother, if you are vouchsafed a spiritual gift, do not be high-minded, for you possess nothing good that you have not received from God.•••• If, having received this gift, you do not walk according to His Will, He will take it away from you and give it to one who is better and of humble mind.

15. It was said of a certain Elder that for seven years he besought God to grant him a particular spiritual gift, and this gift was finally bestowed on him. He then went to a great Elder and told him about the gift. But when the latter heard about it, he was distressed and said to the visiting Elder: "You have labored mightily for this gift. Now go and implore God for another seven years that He take it away from you, for it is of no benefit to you." The Elder departed and did as he was bidden, until God removed the gift from him.

16. God granted the gift of clairvoyance to a certain Elder on account of his great humility. On one occasion, when the Elder foreknew that some people were coming to visit him, he became dispirited. After they had left, he besought God to take this gift away from him. He went to another Elder, a man of great renown, and pleaded with him, saying: "Struggle with me in prayer, so that this gift might be taken away from me." They both sat down, each in his own cell, and prayed to God about this matter. A voice then came to the Elder which said: "Behold, I am taking this gift away from you. However, whenever you desire it, it is yours."

17. The Devil appeared to one of the brothers, transformed into an Angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14), and said to him: "I am Gabriel and I have been sent to you." The brother answered: "Make sure you have

not been sent to someone else, for I am not worthy to see Angels, living in sins as I do." The Devil immediately vanished.•••••

18. Some people once brought a demoniac to Abba Longinos. The Elder said to them: "What can I do to help you? It is preferable that you go to Abba Zeno." So they went to Abba Zeno. When they arrived at his cell, the Elder began to rebuke the demon, ordering it to depart from the man, and prayed against it fervently. The demon then cried out: "Do you really suppose, Abba Zeno, that I am coming out of this man because of you? Behold, Abba Longinos is over there praying and pleading with God against me. It is because I fear *his* prayers that I am coming out, for otherwise I would not even have responded to you."

19. On another occasion, a woman who was suffering from cancer heard about Abba Longinos and sought to meet him. The Elder lived at the ninth milestone from Alexandria.† While the woman was searching for him, it so happened that the Elder was gathering wood beside the sea. When the woman found him, she asked him, "Abba, where does the servant of God Abba Longinos live?"—not knowing that this was he. He replied: "What do you want with that impostor? Do not go to him, for he is a charlatan. But tell me, what is the matter with you?"

20. The woman showed him the tumor. After making the sign of the Cross over the spot, he let her go, saying: "Go, and God will heal you, for Longinos cannot help you at all." The woman departed, trusting in what he had told her, and was immediately healed. Afterwards, she related this incident to certain people, and when she described the features of the Elder, she discovered that it was Abba Longinos himself.

21. A demoniac once went to Sketis and prayer was offered for him in the Church. But the demon did not come out of him, for he was obstinate. The clergy said to each other: "What are we going to do about this demon? No one other than Abba Bessarion can drive him out, and if we ask him, he will not even come to the Church. Let us do this, then. He comes to Church early in the morning, before everyone else. Let us make the sick man sleep in his place, and when the Elder enters, let us be ready to begin the service and say to him: 'Wake this brother up, Abba.'" This is what they did, and the Elder said to the demoniac: "Get up and depart." The demon immediately left him and from that hour the man was healed.

Abba Longinos

22. A layman once went to visit Abba Sisoes, and he took his son along with him. At that time, the Elder was living on the mountain of Abba Anthony. It so happened that the layman's son died on the way. The man was not perturbed by this, but brought him to the Elder with unwavering faith.†† Holding the boy in his arms, he bowed before Abba Sisoes, as though making a prostration, so that they might take the Elder's blessing. The father then arose, leaving the dead child at the feet of the Elder, and went out of his cell.

23. Abba Sisoes, supposing that the boy was making a prostration to him, and not knowing that he was dead, said to him: "Get up and go outside." The child got up at once and went out. His father was astonished when he saw him. He went into the Elder's cell, bowed before him, and told him what had happened. When the Elder heard this, he was distressed, for he did not want such miracles to occur (lest people praise him). Therefore, his disciple ordered the boy's father not to tell anyone about this incident until the Elder's repose.

24. A brother asked an Elder: "How is it that some people have revelations and visions of Angels?" The Elder replied: "Blessed is he, my child, who always sees his own sins, for such a one is ever in a state of vigilance." The brother said to him: "Several days ago, Father, I saw a certain brother casting a demon out of another brother."

25. The Elder replied to him: "I have no desire to cast out demons or cure illnesses, but I wish, and entreat God, that a demon not enter into me and that I cleanse myself of unclean thoughts. If I accomplish that, I will truly have become great. For if anyone cleanses his heart of unclean thoughts and resolutely performs his rule of prayer, he will assuredly be vouchsafed the Kingdom of Heaven, together with the Fathers who worked miracles."

26. A brother renounced the world together with his father according to the flesh, and they both lived in the same monastery. After some time, the brother heard that his father had healed a sick man who was suffering from a demonic disorder. Distressed over this,††† he went to a certain great Elder and related the matter to him, saying: "Abba, my father has made such progress that he has expelled a demon from one of the brothers, whereas I am negligent and have not made any progress."

27. The Elder replied to him: "In all truth, my child, expelling demons and curing the sick are not proofs of progress in asceticism; for it is not man who effects these miracles, but the power of God and the faith of the one who comes for healing. Some people, not understanding this point, have fallen into pride and have lost their souls. I maintain, however, that if a man attains to true humility, there is no greater progress than this, and that such a man is never in any danger of falling. For he who has once and for all abased himself through humility, to what lower level can he fall? The mark of such a man is that he endures being dishonored."

28. Abba Pityrion, the disciple of Abba Anthony, used to say: "Let him who wishes to drive out demons from others first subdue the cognate passions; for, whatever passion one overcomes, he drives out its corresponding demon. The passion of anger, of lust, or of sorrow follows a man and takes up residence in his soul whenever the kindred demon so desires. If, therefore, you gain control over a particular passion, you have thereby expelled the demon that accompanies that passion."

29. A certain anchorite dwelt in the inner desert for thirty years, obtaining his sustenance from a single wild berry bush. After some time had passed, he began to say to himself: "In vain have I spent so much time in this place; for look, I have been here for so many years, eating nothing other than these wild berries, and I have neither had any revelation nor worked any miracle, as did the Fathers before me. I will leave this place, therefore, and go back to the world."

30. As he was entertaining these thoughts, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him, saying: "What are you thinking about?" He recounted to the Angel what he was turning over in his mind, and the Angel said to him: "And what miracle do you want to work? Is there a greater miracle than the patience and courage that God has given you? Just consider Who it is that has strengthened you to persevere for so many years in this place, nourishing yourself from a single wild berry bush. Endure, then, and beseech God to grant you humility." Fortified by the Angel, the anchorite persevered in that place for the rest of his life.

* The words "to convert a sinner by preaching the word of God and by consoling him with prayer" are taken from the Latin original (*Patrologia Latina*, Vol. LXXVII, col. 265A)—*Trans.*

** As, for example, we see in the case of the Divine Paul who, as is well known, said: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren" (Romans 9:3).

*** "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

**** The words "unless perhaps" are taken from the Latin original (*Patrologia Latina*, Vol. LXXVII, col. 265C)—*Trans.*

***** Sections 1-3 are from the Life of St. Anthony by St. Athanasios the Great—*Editors.*

• "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (St. Luke 10:19).

•• That is, to be granted the gift of working miracles—*Trans.*

••• Sections 4-13 are from the Life of St. Pachomios—*Editors.*

•••• See I Corinthians 4:7: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"—*Trans.*

••••• For the sake of clarity, we have added the final sentence from the version of this story printed in *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν* (Panorama, Greece: Ekdose Hierou Hesychasteriou "To Genesion tes Theotokou," 1999), Vol. IV, p. 142 (chapter 15, §197)—*Editors.*

† "Milestones" were signs by which distances on roads were indicated for the benefit of travellers, just as is done today by means of signs that indicate distances in kilometers. The famous monastery called "Enaton" was situated at the ninth milestone from Alexandria.

†† Reading "καὶ οὐκ ἐταράχθη, ἀλλ' ἔλαβεν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν Γέροντα πίστει ἀδιστάκτῳ" rather than "ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἐταράχθη ἔχων πίστιν πρὸς τὸν Γέροντα" (see *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. IV, p. 448 [chapter 19, §23])—*Trans.*

††† Not because he was jealous of his father for having cast out a demon, but because he supposed that such an accomplishment bespoke a level of spiritual and ascetical advancement that he was conscious of not having attained—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XXXVI

That love is the greatest of all the virtues and that he who loves his neighbor, as God wills, in all circumstances puts the benefit and comfort of his neighbor before his own interests.

A. From Palladios

1. There was once a man from Egypt named Serapion. He was nicknamed "the Sindonite," because he wore nothing but a loincloth. He practiced every virtue to the highest degree and surpassed almost everyone in non-acquisitiveness. On account of this virtue, he was unable to live in solitude in a cell, lest he be distracted by material concerns or possessions. Instead, he spent his days going around hither and thither, receiving his daily sustenance from whomever he met. He possessed nothing of his own, except for the loincloth that he wore.

2. With the aid of a well-known ascetic, Serapion sold himself in a certain city to a pagan actor for twenty *solidi*. After receiving this sum from the ascetic, he kept it on his person. He served the actor and his wife and household very diligently and capably, partaking only of bread and water, giving his mind and lips no respite from studying the Divine Scriptures.

3. After he had lived with them for a long time, when a suitable opportunity arose, he spoke with them about Christianity. He first pricked the conscience of the actor, and then that of his wife and his entire household. They all subsequently embraced the Christian Faith and were Baptized. After their Baptism, they withdrew from the theatrical profession and led a God-pleasing life. Moved by great reverence for Serapion, the cause of their salvation, they said to him one day: "Come, brother, let us set you free, since you have freed us from the disgraceful slavery of sin."

4. Serapion then said to them: "Since my God has shown you His mercy and by your coöperation your souls have been saved through me, I will tell you my secret: Divine Providence used me as an instru-

Abba Serapion

ment for your salvation. When I was a freeman, I was an ascetic, an Egyptian by race. I took pity on you because you were living in grave error. I sold myself to you so that you might be delivered from great sins and be saved. Now that God has done what I wanted, I will depart, so that I might help save other people."

5. After saying this, he returned to them the money with which they had purchased him as a slave. But they declined to accept it and urged him to give it to the poor, since it had become for them the pledge of their salvation. Serapion replied to them: "Keep it and give it away yourselves, for it is not right that I give other people's money to the poor." At his insistence, they accepted the money, but they implored him to remain with them, giving him the following assurance: "We will have you henceforth as our spiritual Father and the master of our souls."

6. Since, despite their many entreaties, they were unable to persuade him, they asked him to visit them, if only once a year. Bidding them farewell, the blessed one went from there to Lakedaimonia. On learning that one of the notable men of the city was, along with his entire family, an adherent of the Manichæan heresy, though he was virtuous in every other respect and aspired to piety, Serapion sold himself to this man through the agency of someone else. Within two years, he succeeded in weaning him and all his family away from their heresy and in bringing them to the Church. He then left them, too, and went around the world, doing good to people as much as he was able.

B. From the Life of St. Ioannikios

1. While the great Ioannikios was going from Ephesus to Kantouria, he met two nuns on the way: a mother with her daughter. The daughter was by now exhausted from the licentious impulses that she felt within herself, while her mother strove by means of admonitions to curb the movements of the flesh in her daughter.

2. After meeting these two women and learning of their situation, he felt pain in his soul over the suffering of the daughter. He summoned the girl and bade her place her hand on his neck, which she did, and he prayed that she might be delivered from the temptation that was vexing her and that it might fall on him. Freed from carnal warfare, she re-

turned to the sisterhood to which she had previously belonged; at the same time, that dreadful carnal warfare was aroused in the Saint.

3. Sensing that evil thoughts were impelling him to commit unseemly deeds, he found a serpent, as fearful as a dragon, in one of the nearby caves. He immediately offered himself to this serpent as food, goading it to bite his body, even if it had no appetite for this. For he preferred to die than to enslave the dignity of his soul to carnal desires.

4. As soon as he offered himself up to the serpent, the evil thoughts, the seeds of the noetic serpent, were put to flight and any carnal desire that had previously tormented him was also withered and deadened. The beast itself was slain forthwith by an unseen power, and from then on that struggler, the great Ioannikios, was endowed with dominance over all manner of beasts, both visible and invisible.

C. From the Life of St. Evthymios

1. When the Divine Evthymios was about to depart from this earthly life, he summoned his disciples to himself and said to them: "My Fathers, beloved brothers in the Lord, and children, I am now setting out on my final journey, as did my Fathers before me. You must show your love for me by keeping the commandments. Chief of these is love, which is the bond of perfection of the virtues (*cf.* Colossians 3:14); for, just as salt is to bread, so also is love to the virtues; and without it, one cannot achieve virtue as he ought. Indeed, love and humility are the sure criteria of all genuine virtue.

2. "Humility leads one who practices it to the height of the virtues, while love binds the virtues securely together and does not allow one to fall from that height. That love is the greatest of all the virtues is evident from the example of the Master and Creator; for on account of His love for us, He willingly humbled Himself and became as we are; therefore, we must forever give thanks and offer hymns to Him and care, as much as we can, for those in afflictions."

3. Love is the seal of God upon the soul. For this reason, the Lord commanded His Disciples: "By this shall all men know that ye are My Disciples, if ye have love one to another" (St. John 13:35). About whom is it said that they shall know you? Obviously, about men, but especially

about the powers on the right and the left, that is, Angels and demons, at the hour of death.

4. For if the adversaries see the sign of love accompanying the soul, they withdraw from it in fear, and thereupon all of the Holy Powers will rejoice with it. Let us struggle, therefore, brethren, as much as we can, to acquire love, lest our enemies gain possession of us at that hour.

5. If your brother calls you while you are occupied with your manual work, make haste to see what he wants and work with him, leaving aside your own work. If it is a task that involves remuneration, let your brother share in the proceeds and do not begrudge him. If it is a small task and the one brother says to the other, "You may go, brother, and attend to your own work—I can take care of this by myself," let the latter obey the former. The one who obeys is the greater.

6. If you go to a place to live and purchase a cell, and build it up and spend money on it, and after a time you leave it and another brother takes up residence there, and then after a short while you wish to return to that cell, do not throw that brother out, but seek another cell for yourself, lest you sin against God. If the brother wishes to leave by his own choice, you are in the clear; but if you have left various items in the cell and he has taken them to use, do not demand them back from him.

7. When you depart from a particular cell, be sure not to take its contents with you, but leave them therein for a poor brother, and God will provide for you wherever you go. If you are living with another brother, and your thoughts suggest that you restrict more greatly how much food you eat, say to your thoughts, "This weak brother here is my master in dietary matters." If you really want to live in greater abstinence, find yourself a small cell apart, and do not upset your weak brother.*

D. From the *Gerontikon*

1. An ascetic elder** once visited Abba John, who had been a eunuch from birth. While they were talking, Abba John said: "When I was in Sketis, the works of the soul were our work, and we regarded manual labor as secondary; but now, as I see things, the work of the soul has become secondary, and what is secondary, our handiwork, has become

our primary work."

2. The ascetic Elder asked him: "Why do you say this, Father?" The Abba replied: "Whatever is done in order to fulfill the commandments of God is a work of the soul; but to work and gather provisions for oneself, this we should consider secondary."

3. The Elder then said: "Please explain this point to me." The Abba answered: "Pay attention, so as to learn this by examples. Suppose you hear that I am ill and you feel obligated to visit me,*** according to the command of God, but you say to yourself, 'Do I have to leave my handiwork now and go? No, I will finish my work and then I will go.' Perhaps another pretext occurs to you, and you do not go at all. Again, someone else says to you, 'Give me a hand, brother,' and you say to yourself, 'Am I to leave my handiwork and go and work with him?' So, if you do not go, you disregard a commandment of God (to help your brother), which is a work of the soul, and do what is secondary, which is the work of your hands."

4. Abba Anthony said: "Our life and our death depend on our neighbor: if we gain our brother, we gain God; and if we scandalize our brother, we sin against Christ."

5. Abba John the Short said: "It is not possible to build a house from the top down; one must build it from the foundation to the top." "What does this saying mean?" his disciples asked him. The Elder replied: "The foundation is your neighbor, whom you must win over to Christ by your love—and this must be done first; for on him depend all the commandments of Christ."****

6. A brother asked an Elder: "How is that some struggle in their way of life and yet do not receive the Grace that the Fathers of old received?" The Elder replied: "Back then there was love, and each one drew his neighbor upwards; but now that love has grown cold, each one drags his neighbor downwards. This is why we do not receive Grace."

7. Abba Agathon said: "If it were possible for me to find a leper, give him my body, and receive his, I would be very glad; for this is perfect love."

8. It was said of Abba Agathon that on one occasion he went to sell his wares in the city, where he found a sick stranger lying in the square without anyone to look after him. The Elder rented a small room and stayed with him, paying the rent from his handiwork and spending the rest of his funds on the needs of the invalid. The Elder remained there for four months, until the sick man was cured, and then returned to his cell in peace.

9. On another occasion, the same Elder went to the city to sell his wares, and he found a leper lying beside the road. The leper said to him: "Set me down where you sell your wares." Agathon did so. And when he had sold an item, the leper asked him: "How much did you sell it for?" The Elder replied: "For such and such an amount." "Buy me a sweet cake," the leper said. The Elder brought one. When he sold another piece of handiwork, the leper asked him: "How much did you sell this one for?" Agathon replied: "For such and such an amount." Again the sick man said: "Buy me this." The Elder went and bought it.

10. After selling all of his wares and doing the same thing in each case, Abba Agathon wanted to leave, but the leper asked him: "Are you going away?" "Yes," replied the Elder. The leper said: "Do me another favor and take me back to the place where you found me." Agathon lifted him up and took him to his former place. Then he said to the Elder: "Agathon, you are blessed by the Lord in Heaven and on earth." Raising his eyes, the Elder saw no one; for it was an Angel of the Lord who had come to test him.

11. It was said of Abba Agathon that, wherever he was, he was eager to serve everyone. If he was crossing a river on a ferryboat, he would be the first to take the oars. And when the brethren came to visit him, he would set out a meal with his own hands, as soon as they had prayed; for he was filled with the love of God.

12. There was an Elder in the Cells by the name of Apollo. If anyone came, asking him to help in some task, he would go with joy, saying: "I am going to work with Christ today for the sake of my soul."

13. Abba Theodore of Enaton said: "When I was younger, I used to live in the desert. One day, I went to the bakery to make two loaves. I found there a brother who also wanted to make bread, but did not have

anyone to help him. Leaving my work aside, I gave him a hand.

14. "While I was finishing helping that brother, another brother entered the bakery. I gave him a hand, too. I made bread for him. And then a third brother entered, and I did likewise. After him another brother came in, and then yet another, to a total of six, and so I made altogether six batches of bread. Afterwards, since no one else came, I made my own loaves, and thus I departed."

15. Abba Anthony said: "I have never put my own interests before the good of my brother."

16. Abba Peter said about Abba Makarios, that he once visited a certain anchorite and, finding that he was ill, asked him what he would like to eat, since there was nothing in his cell. When the anchorite asked for a *pasteli,****** the Elder did not hesitate to go to Alexandria, buy it, and bring it back to the ailing monk—and this without anyone knowing what he had done.

17. Abba Joseph recounted the following story about Abba Agathon: "He had a chisel that he used in his work. One day, a brother came to visit him and expressed his admiration for this knife; the Elder would not allow the brother to leave without taking the chisel."

18. It was said of Abba Poimen that he was living in Sketis with his two brothers, the younger of whom annoyed the other two.• Abba Poimen said to the other brother: "This lad is a nuisance to us. Get up and let us go away from here." They departed from Sketis, leaving the younger brother behind. When he noticed that they were late in returning, the brother went out in search of them. Beholding them already far off in the distance, he began to run after them, crying out.

19. When Abba Poimen saw him, he said to the brother who was with him: "Let us wait for our brother, for he is tiring himself out in running after us." As soon as the younger brother caught up with them, he made a prostration before them and asked them: "Where are you going? Are you leaving on my account?" The Elder replied to him: "We are leaving Sketis because you annoy us." To this the younger brother said: "Yes, yes, let us go together wherever you want."

20. Perceiving the guilelessness of the younger brother, Abba Poimen said to the other brother: "Let us return to our cell, brother, for he is not doing these things voluntarily; rather, it is the Devil who is inciting him to do them." They turned around and went back to their cell.

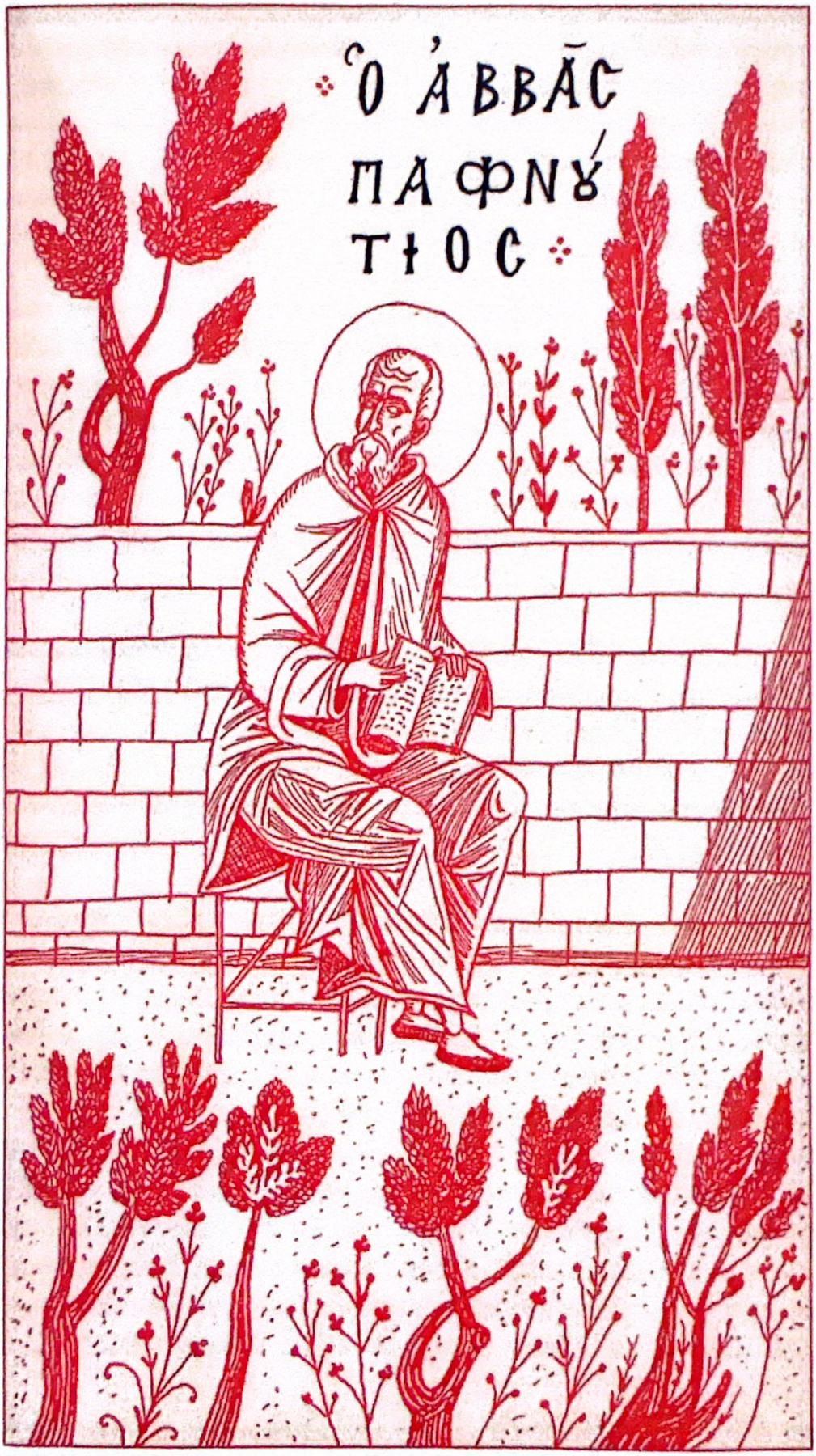
21. Some Saracens once came and robbed Abba Sisoes and his brother of all that they had, leaving them without any provisions. After the Saracens had departed, the two ascetics went out into the desert in order to find something to eat. The Elder came across some camel dung and, after breaking it up, found some grains of barley inside it. Picking these out, he ate one himself and placed the other in his hand.

22. The brother came along and, finding Abba Sisoes eating, said: "Is this love, that you find something to eat and eat it on your own, without calling me?" The Elder replied to him: "I have not done you any wrong, brother; here is your portion, which I have kept in my hand."

23. It was said of Abba Paphnoutios that he did not readily drink wine. While he was out walking one day, he ran into a band of brigands, who were drinking wine at that time. He was recognized by the leader of these brigands, who knew that he did not drink wine. When he saw that Abba Paphnoutios was weary from the journey, he filled a cup with wine and offered it to him. At the same time, holding his sword in his other hand, he said to the Elder: "If you do not drink this wine, I will kill you."

24. Abba Paphnoutios, knowing that he would fulfill a commandment of God if he desired to win over the leader of the brigands, took the cup and drank the wine. However, the leader of the brigands, realizing that he had distressed the ascetic, made a prostration before him and said to him: "Forgive me, Abba, for I have grieved you." The Elder simply replied to him: "I trust in God, that because of this cup He will have mercy on you, both in this life and in the next." For his part, the leader of the brigands avowed: "I believe in God, that by His power I shall henceforth do no harm to anyone." In this manner, Abba Paphnoutios won over all of the brigands, since he set aside his own will for the Lord's sake.

25. Someone recounted the following story. Once upon a time, in a



Abba Paphnoutios

certain province, there was an official in the imperial civil service who was young and good-looking. He had a friend, an eminent man in that province, who was married to a younger woman. Out of affection, this man used to invite the official regularly to his own house, where he would dine with him and his wife. But the woman developed lustful thoughts towards the official, unbeknownst to him and, overcome by these thoughts, fell ill and took to her bed.

26. Her husband, therefore, summoned doctors, who, after examining her,•• informed him that her malady was not physical, but rather psychic in nature. Her husband pleaded with her and exerted every kind of pressure on her, in order to ascertain the cause of her illness. Finally, with some difficulty, he persuaded her to reveal the truth to him. She said: "You know what it is, my lord. Whether out of love or out of naïveté, you bring younger men here, and I, as a woman, have taken a fancy to that official with whom we regularly dine."

27. On hearing this, her husband calmed down. When the official came by a few days later, as was his wont, her husband explained the situation to him. When he heard about it, he not only did not hold any amorous thoughts towards her, but in fact, moved by love for his friend, felt profound sorrow and said to him: "Do not grieve, my lord, for God is able to help us."

28. He immediately departed. Next, he shaved his head and face, and even plucked out his eyebrows, thereby ruining his handsome features. After wrapping a turban around his head, he went to visit the woman and found her lying in bed, with her husband sitting beside her. He removed the turban that he was wearing and showed them his head and face, saying: "Thus has the Lord dealt with me."

29. When she saw his appearance transformed from such handsomeness to such ugliness, she was aghast. With the help of God and the official's good intent, the carnal warfare was removed from her and she arose from her bed, no longer bothered by those passionate thoughts. The official bade them farewell and departed, and ceased to visit them.

30. A certain Elder in Sketis fell ill and desired to eat fresh bread. On hearing this, one of the brothers, a fellow-struggler, took his sheepskin cloak, placed dry loaves in it, and set off for Egypt. After exchanging

the dry loaves for fresh, hot ones, he brought them to the Elder. When the brethren saw the hot loaves, they marvelled at the love shown by this brother.

31. But the Elder did not want to taste them, saying: "This was gained by the blood of my brother." The Elders implored him: "For the Lord's sake, eat, so that your brother's sacrifice will not have been in vain." Yielding to their entreaties, he ate.

32. A certain ascetic, finding a demoniac who was unable to fast, besought God that the demon should enter him and the demoniac be set free. God heard his request and the demon, leaving that man, entered the ascetic. Although he was oppressed by the demon, the ascetic persisted in fasting and prayer and devoted himself to ascetical labors, and within a few days, because of his great love, God expelled the demon from him.

33. There was a certain solitary who had another solitary as his disciple. The latter lived in a cell ten miles away from him. One day, his thoughts said to him: "Summon the brother to come here and receive his bread." But then he reflected: "Am I going to make my brother trek ten miles for the sake of bread? No, I will take the bread to him myself." So he took the bread and set off to visit his disciple.

34. While on his way, he stubbed his foot against a stone, and a large amount of blood flowed from the wound that formed on his toe. He began to cry from the pain. At that very moment, an Angel appeared before him, saying: "Why are you crying?" Showing him the wound on his toe, the monk said: "This is why I am crying." The Angel replied to him: "Do not cry on account of this, for the very steps that you take for the sake of the Lord are counted and are reckoned worthy of great reward in the sight of God." Then, giving thanks to God for the words of the Angel, the ascetic went on his way, rejoicing. He arrived at the brother's cell, bearing the loaves of bread, and recounted to him the love for mankind that God had shown to him. After giving him the bread, he returned to his own cell.

35. On the following day, he again took some loaves of bread and went to visit another monk. It so happened that the latter was coming towards him at the same time for the same purpose, and they met each

other on the way. The one who was going said to the one who was coming: "I had a treasure, and you sought to rob me of it?" The other monk replied to him: "Does the strait gate have room only for you?••• Allow me to enter it together with you." And at once, as they were speaking, an Angel of the Lord appeared to them and said: "This 'quarrel' of yours has ascended to God as an odor of sweet savor."

* Sections 3-7 are from Abba Isaiah—*Editors.*

** This was Abba Theodore of Pherme. See Abba Theodore of Pherme, §§10-11, *Patrologia Græca,* Vol. LXV, col. 189B-D—*Trans.*

*** "I was sick, and ye visited Me" (St. Matthew 25:36).

**** "Jesus said unto him: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets'" (St. Matthew 22:37-40).

***** An oblong cookie (or candy bar) made of baked honey and sesame (or pistachio nuts)—*Trans.*

• His name was Paisios (see Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1966], pp. 70, 79)—*Trans.*

•• I have added the words "after examining her" from the text printed in *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν,* Vol. III, p. 260 (chapter 17, §33)—*Trans.*

••• "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (St. Matthew 7:13-14).

Hypothesis XXXVII

That we ought to lay down even our life for our neighbor.

A. From Palladios

1. In a book by Hippolytos, who was known to the Apostles,* I found the following story. There lived in Corinth during the time of the persecutions [against the Christians—*Trans.*] a noble and beautiful maiden who led a virtuous life. During a time of impending persecution, she was denounced to the city magistrate—a pagan—as one who blasphemed the Emperors and the idols. These exploiters, wishing to incite him, praised** her beauty to that ungodly magistrate, who was a womanizer, and he gladly listened to them.

2. Thus, she was hauled before this bloodthirsty tyrant, who, on seeing her beauty for himself, became even more inflamed with lust for her. When, after employing every trick at his disposal, he was unable to entice her, he subjected the noble maiden to various torments. But even then he could not frighten her into rejecting her confession of Christ. Enraged, he had her taken forcibly to a brothel and ordered the owner of the brothel to give him thirty *solidi* every day out of that which he charged for her hire.

3. So the latter, collecting payment for this shameful work, hired her out to all those patrons of that den of vice who desired to sin with her. But she besought the wanton young men that approached her, saying to them: "I have a wound in a hidden place that reeks unbearably, and I am afraid that you will come to hate me, because the wound is so repulsive. But give me a few days, until I get better, and then you will be able to have me for free."

4. Persuading them with such words as these, she could dismiss them—at least for a while. In the meantime, she besought God with incessant supplications and fervent tears to deliver her from this temptation. And God, Who penetrates men's hearts, seeing how wholeheartedly she strove to preserve her purity, aroused the heart of a certain

young man who worked for the magistrate, and who was comely both inwardly and outwardly, and inspired in him such Divine zeal that he was willing to risk even death to rescue her from that place.

5. So, one night that noble young man, in the guise of a libertine, entered the brothel and, offering five *solidi* to the brothel-keeper, said to him, "Let me spend the night with this woman" (indicating the maiden from Corinth). When they entered the appointed chamber, he told her: "Get up and save yourself." He then bade her undress and clothed her with his own garments and mantle. Having thus altered her appearance, he said to her: "Cover up your face with a corner of my mantle and leave immediately." Making the sign of the Cross, she did as he had said and escaped from that corrupt place without losing her virginity. And so she was delivered.

6. The next day, when the deed was discovered, the official was straightway seized and led bound before the bestial magistrate, at whose orders he was thrown to the beasts. He thus received the crown of martyrdom, having contended for the sake of his own soul and for the sake of that blessed and glorious maiden.

7. During the years of the wild and savage Vandals, many parts of Italy were laid waste. The region of Campania was rendered completely desolate. Many who dwelt in that region were taken captive and carried off to Africa as slaves. Now, Paulinus, the Bishop of the city of Nola [called "Nuvlana," in ancient times—*Trans.*], distributed to the captives and those in need everything that he had in his episcopal residence.

8. When he had absolutely nothing left to give, a widow came to him and told him that her son had been taken prisoner by the son-in-law of the king of the Vandals. Therefore, she asked the man of God for the money necessary to pay her son's ransom, in the hope that his master might deign to accept the money and set her son free.

9. Upon hearing this, the venerable Bishop searched with great diligence and eagerness to see whether he might find anything to give her. Finding nothing, he answered the woman, saying to her: "Madam, I have nothing to give you. But I will offer myself as a slave under your authority, so that you may hand me over to slavery in your son's place, and receive him back."*** Hearing this from the mouth of such a man

as Bishop Paulinus, she took it to be a mockery of her misfortune and not an expression of sympathy for her suffering. The Bishop, being learned and shrewd, persuaded the doubting woman that he had spoken the truth and advised her not to hesitate to give him up to slavery, in order to liberate her son.

10. And so they both left for Africa. As the king's son-in-law was passing by, the widow approached him and entreated him to restore her son to her. However, that barbarian, puffed up with conceit, not only would not consent to fulfill her request, but was loath even to listen to her.

11. But the widow continued: "Look, I am offering you this man as a substitute for him. Only have pity on me and give me back my only child." Then the barbarian noticed the graceful mien of the man who had accompanied the widow, and asked him: "What skills do you have?" "I have not learned any skills," replied the man of God, "but I do know how to take good care of a garden."

12. The barbarian was very pleased to hear this and accepted her offer. He took the Bishop as his slave and returned the woman's son to her. After that, the mother left Africa together with her son, and Paulinus undertook to care for the barbarian's garden.

13. His master began to come into the garden more often and to ask the gardener about various matters. From these conversations, he came to realize that his gardener was a very wise man, and he abandoned all of his family friends and began to meet with Paulinus constantly, enjoying his words. For his part, Paulinus would bring a fresh supply of fragrant herbs**** to his master's table every day and, on receiving his daily bread, would return to cultivate the garden.

14. This routine continued for a long time. Then one day, during one of their usual conversations, Paulinus said confidentially to his master: "Consider what you are going to do and take thought for how the kingdom of the Vandals is to be governed, because within the next few days the king of the Vandals is undoubtedly going to die."

15. As soon as he heard this, Paulinus' master was by no means at ease, because the king loved him more than all others. He therefore in-

formed the king of all that he had heard from the gardener. On hearing these things, the king desired to see the gardener. His son-in-law then told him: "This gardener of mine is accustomed to bringing me fresh herbs every day for my meals. I will have him bring them to your table, so that you may become acquainted with him."

16. So, the next day, when the king was about to dine, Paulinus came in, bringing him fragrant herbs. As soon as he set eyes on him, the king was overcome with trembling. He summoned Paulinus' master (his son-in-law) and told him that which he had until then kept secret. "What you heard from the gardener," he said, "is true. For last night I saw in a dream judges sitting on a tribunal opposite me, who confiscated the scourge***** which, by their decision, I had once received. Among them was the gardener. So ask him who he is, since, having seen him in a position of such honor, I do not suppose that he is the ordinary man that he appears to be."

17. So the king's son-in-law straightway took Paulinus aside and asked him who he was. The man of God answered: "I am the slave whom you took into your service as a substitute for the widow's son." Then his master, seeking earnestly to find out, not who he was now, but what position he had held in his homeland, asked him under oath to tell him. Constrained as he was, since he respected the oath and was unable to violate it, the man of God admitted that he was a Bishop.

18. When his master heard this, he was struck with awe, and with the deepest humility he said to him: "Ask from me whatever you want, so that you might return to your country with great gifts." The man of God responded: "If you wish to benefit me, there is but one thing that I would ask: that all the captives that come from my diocese be set free."

19. Following his request, a search was immediately made throughout Africa for all of the captives that had come from Paulinus' city. They were all discovered and put aboard ships loaded with grain, by way of reparation to the most pious Paulinus who, now free, sailed back to Italy with them. It was not long before the king of the Vandals died, as Paulinus had predicted, and relinquished the scourge which, by God's permission, he had held, both to his own utter damnation and for the chastisement of the faithful.

20. One day, a certain Deacon was captured by the Lombards. They bound and imprisoned him, intending to kill him. When it was toward evening, a man of God, Sanctulus by name, who lived in the region of the Lombards, came and entreated them to spare the Deacon's life. But they would not yield.

21. Seeing that they had firmly decided to put the Deacon to death, that most pious man requested that they deliver the Deacon into his custody. The Lombards replied to him: "We will give him over to your custody, but only on condition that, if he should escape, you will die in his place." That pious man willingly accepted these terms, and the Lombards then entrusted to him the Deacon who had been selected for execution.

22. At about midnight, when he had ascertained that all of the Lombards were fast asleep, he woke the Deacon and said to him: "Get up and leave quickly, and God, Who is all-powerful, will deliver you." But the Deacon, aware of the promise that Sanctulus had made, answered him: "I cannot leave, Father, for if I do, you will surely die on my account." The pious Sanctulus urged him to escape, saying: "Get up and go! Almighty God will deliver you. As for me, I am in God's hands, and only such as He permits can they do to me." After this, the Deacon was persuaded and left, while Sanctulus, who had stood surety for him,• remained in the same place, as if he had been double-crossed.

23. In the morning, the Lombards came seeking the man whom they had entrusted to him. Then the most pious Sanctulus said to them: "The Deacon escaped." "You know fully well what the terms of our agreement were," said the Lombards. "Yes, I know," the Lord's servant answered courageously. "As you are a good man, we do not wish that you should die under torture. So choose whichever kind of death you prefer." The man of God answered them: "I am in God's hands, so put me to death in whatever manner He permits." Then all the barbarians agreed that he should be beheaded.

24. Informed that Sanctulus, who was held in the highest honor on account of his holiness, was going to be executed, the Lombards of that region all came together, for, in their accustomed cruelty, they were pleased at the prospect of witnessing an execution. Standing around in a circle, they awaited his death. When Sanctulus was led into the midst

of the crowd, the Lombards chose from among their number a man who was distinguished from the others for his bodily strength, who was sure to cut off Sanctulus' head with just one blow.

25. Then Sanctulus asked that he be allowed to pray a little while. After he was given leave for this purpose, he fell upon the ground and began to pray. When his prayer seemed to be taking too long, the executioner came up to him and prodded him with the tip of his foot, saying: "Get up, kneel, and stretch out your neck." The Saint did as he was commanded. The bloodthirsty man then drew his sword and raised his arm high in the air in order to strike him with a mighty blow. But then the executioner's arm became immobile and remained outstretched at that height.

26. Then all the Lombards who had gathered, greatly astonished at what had transpired, began to praise God. Approaching the Saint, they asked him to get up and heal the executioner's arm. Sanctulus arose and said: "I will by no means pray for his healing, unless he first swears that he will never kill a Christian by his own hand." So, the executioner, beset by this torment, swore that he would never thenceforth kill any Christian. The Saint then commanded him to lower his hand, and at that very moment the executioner lowered his hand and sheathed his sword.

27. The Lombards who were present, acknowledging Sanctulus' holiness, offered to give him sheep, cattle, and other items that they had plundered. But the man of God refused such gifts and requested others: "If you wish to offer me something, give me all of the captives you have, so that I may have a reason to pray to God for you." They kept their promise and released all of their prisoners, along with him. In this way, Divine Providence arranged that, by his willingness to lay down his life for one, the Saint would deliver many from death.••

28. When the blessed Savvas was still young, and dwelt in the monastery known as Flavianæ, the monastery baker happened to get his clothes wet. Unable to dry them in the sun, since it was winter, he put them into the oven to dry. But then he forgot about them, and left them drying in the oven. When the need unexpectedly arose, Savvas and some of the other monks began to make bread together with the baker. They lighted the oven, with the clothes—as we said above—hav-

ing been left there out of forgetfulness.

29. The flames were already high when the baker remembered his clothes. Yet there was nothing he could do, for the flames were fearfully intense, and his heart was held fast by grief and despondency over the prospect of losing them.

30. Savvas, unable to bear seeing his brother thus grieved, and inwardly filled with ardent compassion, took no thought either for his own body or for the fire and, arming himself with the sign of the Cross, immediately entered the oven just as he was. He trampled on the flames just as he had previously trampled on pleasures, and he thus rescued the clothes from the fire and emerged from the oven unharmed. The flames showed reverence for him, not for the sake of piety, as was the case with the Three Youths of old, but rather on account of the love that he had for his brother.•••

* Here, the word "Apostles" is to be understood to refer to the disciples and successors of the Holy Apostles and the Apostolic Fathers, given that St. Hippolytos flourished at the beginning of the third century. Biographical data about him are sparse. From his writings, it can be inferred that he was active chiefly in Rome, under Popes Zephyrinus and Callistus (199–223). Hippolytos condemned these two Popes. In fact, during the days of the latter, a schism occurred, Hippolytos being proclaimed Pope of Rome by his followers. In the history books he is known as the "anti-pope." He died a martyric death and is commemorated by the Church on January 30.

** Reading "*προσεπήνουν*" rather than "*προσεποίουν*" (see *La Storia Lausiaca*, ed. G.J.M. Bartelink [Milan: A. Mondadori, 1974])—*Trans.*

*** We have here followed the reading "*ἀπολάβῃς*" (="*recipias*") in preference to "*ἀπολαύσῃς*" (see *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. LXXVII, col. 218B)—*Trans.*

**** We have here followed the reading "odiferas virentesque herbas" found in the the original Latin text (see *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. LXXVII, col. 217C)—*Editors.*

***** A symbol of authority.

• We have added the words "who had stood surety for him"—which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from the Greek text in the *Patrologia Latina* (Vol. LXXVII, col. 310C)—*Trans.*

•• Sections 7–27 are from St. Gregory the Dialogist—*Editors.*

••• Sections 28–30 are from the Life of St. Savvas—*Editors.*

Hypothesis XXXVIII

That he who has love and humility in the Lord strives not to grieve his neighbor, but serves him in every way, considering his needs and difficulties as his own.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Agathon said: "I have never loved my brother only in theory, that is, without actually showing my love toward him. For me, love means to assist my brother, for I consider my brother's gain to be for me a fruitful work."*

2. Two brothers lived in the Cells. The elder of the two besought the younger, saying: "Let us dwell together, brother." "I am a sinner," the other responded, "and am unable to live with you, Abba." But the elder persisted in asking him, maintaining that they could, indeed, live together. Now, the elder brother was pure, and for this reason he did not want to hear that his brother had thoughts of fornication. It was this, it appears, that made the younger brother reticent to accept the elder's proposal. So the younger brother said to him, "Allow me a week, and then we will speak again about this."

3. After the week had passed, the younger monk, wishing to test the elder brother, said: "I fell into a great sin this past week, Abba; for I went to a village on some business and sinned with a woman." The elder monk said to him: "Is there such a thing as repentance?" "Yes, there is," the brother replied. The elder brother then said, "I will bear half the burden of your sin; you bear the other half." The younger brother, seeing the elder monk's love, then said: "Now we can dwell together." And they dwelled together until the end of their lives.

4. Once, three brothers undertook to harvest sixty *arourai*** of land. The first day, however, one of them fell ill and returned*** to his cell. Then one of the two who remained said to the other: "Look, brother, you see that our brother is sick; put forth a little effort, then, and I will do likewise, and let us have faith that, through his prayers, we will har-

vest his portion."

5. So when the work was complete and they were about to go and receive their pay, they called their brother, saying, "Come and receive your pay, brother." "What pay," he asked, "seeing that I did not take part in the harvest?" "Through your prayers, the harvest has been completed," the other two answered. "Come on, now, and get your pay." But he would not be persuaded.

6. Since a great dispute arose between them, the one saying, "I will not accept any wages," and the others refusing to allow him not to accept,**** they went to a great Elder, so that he might adjudicate the matter. The monk who refused payment said to him: "Father, the three of us went to the harvest, but the same day I fell ill and returned to my cell. But now my brothers are trying to force me, who have not worked even one hour, to receive wages for the harvesting that they did." Then the other two said: "Father, the three of us together undertook to harvest sixty *arourai*. Even if all three of us had worked, we should not have been able to complete the task. Yet, by the prayers of our brother, the two of us finished the harvest quickly. So now we are telling him to receive his pay, even if he does not want it."

7. Hearing this, the Elder marvelled, telling the brother who was with him: "Ring the bell for all the brethren to assemble together." When all had gathered, the Elder said to them: "Come, brethren, hear today a just judgment"; and he told them everything. The gathered monks insisted, then, that the brother should take his pay and do with it as he wished. And the brother departed, weeping and sorrowing, thinking himself to have gained from the labors of his brothers.

8. The Elders were wont to say that each man is obligated to make his own the matters that occupy his neighbor and to suffer together with his brother in all things that befall him—to rejoice with him and to weep with him, and, in general, to behave toward him as though he were bearing his brother's body, in accordance with the words of Scripture: "[W]e...are one body in Christ" (Romans 12:5), and "[T]he multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32).

9. Once, a monk dwelt together with another brother. When he found out that the latter had sinned with a girl who used to bring them

provisions, he did not chide him for this, but, remaining silent, sighed and increased his prayers for him. He then besought the guilty brother intently to pray for him, saying, "I have committed many sins, and I wish to be freed from them before I die." The brother who had sinned, amazed at his compunction, complied with his request. In the meantime, the brother who had not sinned died, and only then, appearing in a dream, did he reveal the truth to his brother.

10. An Elder related the following story: "Four Presbyters agreed among themselves to dwell in harmony in this present life, as though with one soul, and to be likewise together again in Heaven, trusting in the words of the Master, Who said: '[I]f two of you on earth shall agree as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father Which is in Heaven' (St. Matthew 18:19).

11. "Three of them, therefore, gave themselves over to asceticism and lived as Hesychasts in the desert, while the other served them, providing for their needs. After a time, two of them achieved perfection in Christ, departed this life, and were brought to the same place of rest. The other two remained on earth—the one who had placed himself in the others' service, and one of the ascetics. Once, by the wiles of the Enemy, the caretaker fell into fornication. To one of the Elders of that region, who had the gift of clairvoyance, it was revealed that the two ascetics who had departed unto the Lord were beseeching God concerning the caretaker, saying: 'Deliver the brother up to be eaten by a lion, or some other wild beast, so that, cleansed of his sin, he might come to where we are, lest what we agreed on earth fall through.'

12. "So, as the brother was returning to the skete from an errand as usual, he was met by a lion, which was ravening to kill him. The Hesychast perceived what was happening, since it was revealed to him, and stood at prayer, beseeching God on the brother's behalf; and the lion immediately stood still. So the two Fathers who had already departed this life implored God, saying: 'We beseech Thee, Master, that he be devoured by the lion, that he might come and be with us in this place of blessedness; and do not listen, O Holy One, to the one who is praying for him on earth.'

13. "But the other Elder, with tears, fervently implored God to have mercy on the brother and to deliver him from the lion. And God hear-

kened to his supplication, saying to those in Heaven, 'It is right that his prayer should be heard, rather than yours. For you are here in this place of repose, forever freed from the toils and sweat of life on earth, while he is wearied by bodily hardship and is still struggling against the evil spirits. Therefore it is right that I should grant him his request.'

14. "The lion, therefore, immediately withdrew from the brother. He, coming to the cell, found the Elder still weeping for him and related to him all that had taken place, confessing the sin that he had committed. Understanding that God had spared him, he repented, and in a short time once more attained to his former degree of virtue, assisted by the prayers of the Elder. Then they, too, reposed, and it was revealed to the aforementioned clairvoyant Elder that the four were abiding in the same place in Paradise, in accordance with the unerring promise of our Lord Jesus Christ."

15. Two brothers went to the marketplace to sell their handiwork. While they were separated from each other, one of them fell into fornication. Then his brother came to him and said, "Let us return to our cell." "I am not coming," the other responded. But he besought him, saying, "Why, my brother?" And he said: "Because, when you left me, I fell into fornication." His brother, wishing to bring him profit, said: "And I too, when I departed from you, did likewise. But come, let us repent earnestly, and God will forgive us."

16. So, returning, they confessed to the Elders what had happened to them, and the Elders gave them a rule of repentance. The brother who had not sinned repented on behalf of his guilty brother, as though he himself had sinned. God, seeing the toil which he was undergoing for the sake of love for his brother, after a few days revealed to one of the Elders that, on account of the great love of the brother who had not sinned, He had forgiven the guilty one.*****

17. Once, a brother came to an Elder and said to him: "Father, my brother has abandoned me and goes from place to place, and I am upset at him." The Elder comforted him, saying: "Bear with your brother, and God, seeing your patience, will bring him back to you. It is not easy• to restore someone by harshness; for one demon will not drive out another demon. It is, rather, only through kindness that you will bring him back. Indeed, it is through exhortation that our God brings men back to their

senses."

18. The Elder then told the following story: "There were in the Thebaid two brethren. One of them, beset by the demon of fornication and under the sway of such thoughts, would often say to the other: 'I am going to return to the world.' 'Brother, I will not let you return to the world to waste all your toils and lose your virginity,' his brother would answer with tears. Yet the former could not be persuaded and finally said: 'I will not stay here any longer. I am leaving. So either come with me, and I will return to the world with you, or let me go, for in any case I am going to live in the world.'

19. "Therefore, the brother, at a loss, went to a certain Elder and explained the situation. The Elder said to him: 'Go with him, and God, on account of your toil for his sake, will not allow him to fall.'

20. "So they arose and set out for the world. When they arrived in a certain village, God, seeing the toil which the one brother undertook out of love, removed the struggle from the brother who was beset by lustful thoughts. Thus relieved, he said to his brother: 'Let us suppose, brother, that I were to fall to fornication. What will I have gained from this? Let us rather return once more to our cell.' And so they returned, without either suffering any spiritual harm."

21. "I have never lain down to sleep with a grievance against anyone," Abba Agathon said, "and neither, to the best of my ability, have I let another person fall asleep with a grievance against me."

22. Abba Isaac said: "I have never brought into my cell any bad thought against a brother who has upset me. At the same time, I have been careful to see that no brother ever goes to his cell with a bad thought about me."

23. Abba John was once going from Sketis to another place with several brethren. The man who was guiding them lost his way, since night had fallen. So, the brethren said to Abba John: "What are we to do, Abba? Our brother has lost his way, and we are afraid that we might wander off the beaten track and die during the night."

24. The Elder answered them: "If we tell our brother this, he will be

embarrassed and become upset. No, I will pretend that I am weak and, lacking the strength to walk any farther, will say that I am staying here until morning." And so he did. So, the other brethren, taking his condition as an opportunity to do so, said: "We will not go either, but will stay here with you." And so they waited until morning, when they could find their way, and thus avoided scandalizing their brother.

25. There was an Elder who lived in Egypt, before Abba Poimen and his brothers arrived there. He possessed spiritual knowledge and was esteemed by many. From the time that Abba Poimen and his community came from Sketis and settled in that region, however, the people forsook that Elder and began to go to Abba Poimen. Abba Poimen was grieved for the Elder's sake.

26. Thus, one day he said to his brethren: "What should we do, my brethren, about this great Elder? The people have put us in a bad position by abandoning this man and paying heed to us, who are nothing. How can we show our concern for him?" After thinking for a moment, he said: "Prepare for me a little food and fetch a jug of wine, and let us go to him so that we might eat together."

27. So, they took the food and departed for the Elder's cell. When his disciple heard them knocking on the door, he asked: "Who is there?" And they answered: "Tell the Abba it is Poimen, and he wishes to receive your Elder's blessing." When the disciple reported this to the Elder, the latter had him convey the following message: "Go away, I do not have time to receive you." But they remained in the scorching heat and said: "We will not leave unless we are permitted to see the Elder."

28. The Elder, seeing Abba Poimen's humility and patience, was moved to compunction and opened the door to them. They then entered and ate with the Elder. During the meal, the Elder said to them: "In truth, it is not only all that I have heard about you that impresses me. I see that your deeds are worth a hundred times more." From that day forth he became their friend.

29. Abba Poimen said: "He who has love lays down his life for his neighbor. For if one should hear an offensive word, and is himself able to respond with similar words, yet strives not to utter them, or if he is wronged, yet endures it and does not repay the one who has wronged

him, then such a one lays down his life for his neighbor."

30. An Elder once came to Abba Lot, who lived in the small marsh of Arsinoë, and asked him for a cell; and Abba Lot provided him with one. This Elder was ill, and Abba Lot looked after him. If several people visited him, he would make them visit the sick Elder as well. However, the Elder began to speak with visitors about the teachings of Origen. Abba Lot was distressed by this, fearing lest the Fathers consider him and his community also to be Origenists. Yet, on account of the commandment regarding love for one's neighbor, he did not want to drive the Elder out of that place.

31. He arose, therefore, and went to Abba Arsenios and related the Elder's situation to him. Abba Arsenios said to him: "Do not drive him away, but tell him: 'Look, you may eat and drink as you please from that which God provides, but do not say anything more about Origen's teachings.' If he will not accept correction, he will, of his own accord, ask to leave, and you will not be responsible for his departure."

32. Indeed, when Abba Lot returned to his cell, he did as Abba Arsenios had suggested. When the Elder heard what Abba Lot had to say, he did not want to be corrected, but began to ask them to let him go, saying that he could no longer endure the hardship of the desert. And so he got up and left, being sent on his way by all with love.

33. There was a brother who served a sick Elder. It so happened that because of the illness, the Elder's body broke out in ulcers, which began to discharge a malodorous pus. A thought then came to the brother, which was: "Leave this place, because you cannot bear this foul odor."

34. In order to combat such a thought, the brother took a small earthen pot and filled it with the water used to wash the sick Elder's sores. Whenever the thought urged him to leave, he would answer it: "First I will drink from this water, and then I will leave." Then his thoughts would say to him: "Neither leave nor drink this filthy water." Every day the brother struggled with this thought and served the Elder with patience; and God, beholding the brother's efforts, healed the Elder.

35. Several brothers in Sketis sat down to prepare materials used for

making ropes. One of them, who was ill owing to excessive asceticism, was coughing and bringing up phlegm. Though he did not intend it, some of the spittle landed on one of his brothers. This brother was tempted by the thought of saying to the sick brother, "Stop spitting on me." The brother faced his thought by saying: "If you want to flee from his presence, first eat his spittle." His thought was thus quieted, and he said to himself: "Neither eat the spittle nor say anything to the brother."

36. A brother asked Abba Sisoes: "If we are travelling and our guide loses his way, should we tell him?" "No," replied the Elder. "Should we then allow him to lead us astray?" Then the Elder said "What are you going to do, then? Take a stick and beat him with it? I once saw some brethren travelling—there were twelve of them—and their guide lost his way during the night. They all realized that he had lost his way, yet they each strove not to say anything to him, so as not to upset him.

37. "When day came, the guide realized that they had lost their way, and he said to them: 'Forgive me; I have lost the way.' 'Yes, we know,' they answered him, 'but we remained silent.' Their guide, upon hearing this, was amazed and said to himself, 'Even to the point of death, the brethren control themselves, so as not to hurt or grieve anyone,' and he glorified God. The distance they had strayed from the road was twelve miles."

38. An Elder said that humility is stronger than any earthly power. As proof of this, he related the following story: "There once lived two Bishops in neighboring dioceses, who had a disagreement between them. One of them was rich and powerful, while the other was poor. The powerful Bishop used to seek to harm his neighbor. The poor Bishop learned of this and said to his clergy: 'By the Grace of God we can overcome him.' His clergy responded: 'But, Master, who is able to overcome him?' Then he said: 'Be patient, my children, and you will see for yourselves the mercy of God.'

39. "So he bided his time, and when the other Bishop held a feast in honor of certain Holy Martyrs, he assembled all of his clergy and said to them: 'Come, follow me; and whatever you see me do, do likewise, and we will overcome him.' So they followed him, saying among themselves, 'What could he be planning to do?' When they arrived at the Church where the feast was being held, they found a procession pass-

ing in front of them, the entire city having gathered there for the occasion.

40. "Then, in the sight of all, the poor Bishop fell at the feet of the powerful Bishop and, likewise, so did all the clergy who had accompanied him. At the same time he said: 'Forgive us, Master. We are your servants.' The proud Bishop, astonished at this, was moved to compunction, for God had transformed his heart. Then he, in his turn, fell at the feet of the other Bishop and said to him: 'You are my Master and Father.' From that moment forth there was great love between them.

41. "The penurious Bishop said to his clergy: 'Did I not tell you, my children, that we would be able to overcome him through the goodness of God?' And you too, when you are at enmity with other men, do likewise, and you will assuredly prevail, by the Grace of our Lord."

42. An Elder was once asked, "What is humility?" And he replied: "It is for you to forgive your brother who has sinned against you, even before he asks for pardon."

43. A brother asked another Elder: "What is humility of mind?" "It is to do good to those who cause you harm," the Elder replied. "But what if someone cannot attain to such a level? Then what should he do?" The Elder replied: "Let him flee, preferring silence."

44. There was an Elder living in Egypt who always used to say: "There is no shorter road to Paradise than humility."

45. Abba Zeno said that the Blessed Abbot Sergios from the Jordan Plain related to him the following story. "One day," said Abba Sergios, "I was walking with a certain holy Elder and several other brethren. We lost our way and, not knowing where we were going, found ourselves in a sown field, where we quite unintentionally trampled on a few of the crops. As soon as the farmer, who happened to be working there, noticed us, he began to upbraid us, saying angrily: 'Are you monks? Do you not fear God? If you had the fear of God before your eyes, you would not have done this!'

46. "Straightway, that holy Elder enjoined us, in the Name of the Lord, not to speak, and he pleaded with the farmer, saying meekly: 'You

are quite right, my son. For if we did have the fear of God, we would not have done this. Yet, for the Lord's sake forgive us, for we have sinned.' Amazed at the Elder's long-suffering and humility, the farmer hurried toward us, fell at the feet of the Elder, and said: 'In the Name of the Lord, forgive me and take me with you.'"••

47. When he had finished this narration, the Blessed Sergios added the following: "Do you see what it was that the Saint's meekness and good disposition were able to accomplish, with God's help? He saved a soul created in the image of God, which God values above ten thousand worlds and all their goods."•••

B. From St. Ephraim

If a conflict arises between two brothers, the one who is first to ask forgiveness will receive the crown of victory. Yet, the other will be crowned, too, as long as he does not spurn his brother's gesture of repentance, but eagerly seeks, for his part, to restore mutual peace.

C. From St. Barsanouphios

1. A brother asked an Elder: "Since I feel a little ashamed when I make a prostration before certain people, on account of a feeling of vainglory, should I therefore resolve not to make a prostration before this or that person, so as to combat vainglory, or should I act as the moment demands?" The Elder replied: "You should not resolve to make a prostration regardless of the person before you [or: You should not resolve to make a prostration 'before certain people' or 'privately']; rather, do what the moment requires."••••

2. The brother then said: "Should I, therefore, make a prostration before my juniors? Or should I heal them with a word, lest vainglory steal into me from the adversary?" The Elder replied: "Just as there are great and distinguished men who owe money to unimportant and lowly men, but who must pay their debts without being vainglorious just because they are richer than those to whom they are indebted, so also, if you owe something, whether to your junior *or* your superior, make a prostration before him without vainglory, knowing that you are his debtor."

D. From Abba Isaiah

Attend to yourself. If you are aroused to compunction by the thought that your brother is upset with you, do not make light of this thought but make a prostration before him with a plaintive voice, until you win him over. Be careful not to be hard-hearted towards your brother, for we are all beset by the passion of enmity.

E. From St. Diadochos

1. When spiritual knowledge is active within us even to a moderate degree, it makes us sorely distressed when, after insulting someone in a fit of anger, we make an enemy of him; for this never desists from pricking our conscience until, through profuse apologies, we have brought the person whom we have insulted back to the same attitude that he previously had towards us.

2. When our conscience is aroused to the highest degree, and when some worldly person is angry at us without just cause, it makes us extremely anxious and concerned, since we have altogether become a stumbling block for one who thinks and speaks in accordance with the mentality of this world.

3. In such a case, our mind becomes sluggish, incapable of raising itself up to spiritual vision; for the content of spiritual knowledge, which is entirely one of love, does not allow the intellect to expand in such a way as to encompass Divine visions, unless we first win back, through love, even one who is angry with us for no good reason.

4. If he does not wish that we be reconciled, or stays away from our usual haunts, then our conscience impels us to represent the features of his countenance in our soul with unconditional love, thereby fulfilling the law of love in the depths of our heart. For it is said that those who desire to acquire knowledge of God should behold in their intellect—without anger—those who are angry at them without just cause.

5. When this happens, not only will our mind, now free from sins, be inspired to theologize, but it will also ascend to the love of God with great boldness, hastening unimpeded from the second level (love for one's neighbor) to the first (love for God).

6. But if, as the Apostle John says, he who loves his brother also loves

God, and if, conversely, he who does not love his brother does not love God either,••••• it follows logically that he who causes grief to his brother grieves God Himself. The Lord Himself says, in the narrative about the future judgment, that, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (St. Matthew 25:40), and that he who serves his brother serves God Himself.

7. Therefore, my beloved, insofar as we know that we worship God only when we do not cause grief to our neighbor, let us avoid providing him with pretexts or occasions to be aggrieved against us, whether reasonably or unreasonably, so that in this way our prayer might be rendered acceptable to God and not be rejected by Him, like the sheep unsuitable for sacrifice in Old Testamental times.†

8. For when, among two men, "one prayeth, and another curseth, whose voice will the Master hear?" (Ecclesiasticus 34:24); and again: "When one buildeth, and another pulleth down, what profit have they, then, but toils?" (Ecclesiasticus 34:23).

F. From St. Maximos

1. A genuine friend is one who, when his neighbor is undergoing tribulation, imperturbably and calmly suffers with him afflictions, needs, temptations, and calamities as though they were his own.

2. "A faithful friend is a strong defense" (Ecclesiasticus 6:14); for when one is faring well, he is a good counselor and a wholehearted supporter, and when one is faring badly, he is a most genuine helper and a most sympathetic defender.

3. Only the punctilious keepers of the commandments and genuine initiates of Divine judgments do not abandon friends who are being tested by God's leave.

4. Those who despise the commandments and are not initiates of the Divine judgments, when a friend is faring well, enjoy things along with him; but when a friend is tried and is having a hard time, they forsake him—sometimes even to side with his enemies.

* This apophthegm has also been rendered as follows: "Abba Agathon said: 'I have never simply given alms. I make sure that my interactions with others are conducted

with love, for I reckon that my brother's gain is a work of fruitfulness for me'"—*Editors*

** The *aroura* was a unit of area equivalent to a hundred Egyptian square cubits, or about forty square meters. Sixty *arourai* were, therefore, approximately 2.5 acres.

*** We have here restored the words "and returned"— which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν* (Vol. IV, p. 274 [chapter 17, §43])—*Editors*.

**** We have restored the words "the one saying, 'I will not accept any wages,' and the others refusing to allow him not to accept"—which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν* (Vol. IV, p. 274 [chapter 17, §43])—*Editors*.

***** The following sentence is missing from the version of this apophthegm printed in *The Evergetinos*: "Behold, this is what it means to lay down one's life for his brother" (see *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. II, p. 174 [chapter 5, §50])—*Editors*.

• Reading "*εὐχερὲς*" rather than "*εὐγενὲς*" (see *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. II, p. 174 [chapter 5, §51])—*Trans*.

•• In the version of this story printed in the *Patrologia Græca*, Abba Sergios mentions that the farmer in fact followed them and became a monk (see the "Discourses of Abba Zosimas," chapter 11, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXXVIII, col. 1696C; *cf.* John Moschos, *The Spiritual Meadow*, chapter 218, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXXXVII.3, col. 3110B)—*Editors*.

••• "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (St. Matthew 16:26).

•••• We have restored the words, "You should not resolve to make a prostration 'before certain people' or 'privately'"—which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from *Βαρσανουφίου καὶ Ἰωάννου Ἐρωταποκρίσεις (ΣΛ'-ΦΚΒ')*, ed. Stavroula Zachariadou (Thessaloniki: Paterikai Ekdoseis "Gregorios ho Palamas," 1988), p. 140—*Editors*.

••••• "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?" (I St. John 4:20).

† "Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God any calf or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evil thing; for it is an abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 17:1; *cf.* Leviticus 22:20-25).

Hypothesis XXXIX

He who loves his neighbor, as God wills, is his neighbor's benefactor without the latter ever knowing it.

A. From the Life of St. Nicholas

1. There once lived a man who was renowned and wealthy. Unfortunately, however, he lost his wealth and glory and, impoverished and ignominious, he came to lack even the most basic things. Alas, to such a level of misfortune did he fall that he considered putting his three daughters, who were exceedingly beautiful, out for profit, that they might by debauchery insure at least their food. (Misfortune can blind a man!) Moreover, he did not have the ability to provide them with proper spouses, since all of them, whenever the matter arose, simply dismissed him because of his misfortune and indigence [i.e., because of his lack of a dowry for his daughters—*Trans.*].

2. God, however, Who looks after the salvation of all, by His Providence so arranged it that the plight of this unfortunate man came to the attention of the wondrous Nicholas. And behold how, with every good sentiment and with fraternal sympathy for a brother, the Saint acted. He did not wait for the unfortunate father to visit him, or even wait for a short time for the man to reveal his plight to him; nor did the Saint show any indications of his beneficence, as those of petty spirit are wont to do.

He knew fully well, excellent psychologist that he was, that such things upset those who have fallen to misfortune from wealth and glory, causing them to recall their former good fortune, such that they feel horrendously the pain of their misfortune and are brought to shame.

3. Thus, he tried to surpass even the evangelical prescription, that is, that the left hand should not know the good deed of the right,* avoiding even the attention of the person to whom he would show his benefaction. Therefore, St. Nicholas did not seek to attract the glory of men; he systematically tried to do good secretly, far from the attention of others and—especially so—out of the sight of those who plot evil things.

St. Nicholas

Immediately, then, and without losing time, he took a fully-filled sack of gold coins and went, at an appropriately late hour of the night, to the home of the unfortunate and needy father. And having looked about to see that no one had followed him, he threw the precious sack into the house through a small window, so as not to let anyone see him.

4. Now, when early in the morning the despairing father awakened and found the life-saving bag of money, he looked at it with curiosity and, having opened it, with amazement saw the gold coins. In order to affirm that they were gold, he felt the coins with his fingers. When he determined that they were indeed gold, he wondered how they got there; and, at a loss to say, he shed tears of joy. Then his mind began to be tormented with the thought of who, among his friends, could have possibly shown such beneficence. Being unable to identify any benefactor among men, he attributed the act to God, not ceasing to thank Him with tears.

5. Immediately, he hastened with diligence to remove the reason for the fearful sin that he had contemplated. He married off his first daughter, since with the gift of his unknown benefactor he was able to provide a rich dowry. Learning about the marriage of the first daughter, St. Nicholas rejoiced, since the father acted in accord with the Saint's wish and saved this one daughter from the nightmare of prostitution. Indeed, it was the purpose of the Saint to remove any excuse for sin by an honorable and Godly marriage. St. Nicholas next thought about the marriage of the second daughter, and in the same way, without anyone noticing, threw another bag with an equal amount of gold into the unfortunate man's house.

6. In the morning, the father, discovering the valuable little bag, had the same feelings about it that he had about the first sack and, falling to the floor in tears, thanked God:

"O God," he said, "Thou Who showest mercy on all and carest for our salvation, Who becamest man to redeem us from the transgression of disobedience and Who hast now rescued me from a ruinous snare, for the sake of my children, please reveal Thou to me my benefactor, this Angel of Thy kindness, who, amongst men, fulfills so diligently Thy Will. Reveal Thou to me who he is, who raised me from onerous misfortune and who releases my mind from sinful thoughts. By Thy mercy, my God, and with that which has also been presented by this benefac-

tor of mine, I shall marry off my second daughter in a lawful marriage, saving her from becoming a plaything of the Devil and gaining frightful profit for me by suffering the most unforgivable harm."

7. With these thoughts of thanksgiving towards God, the father realized the marriage of his second daughter; and already he had begun to feel warm hope that, with regard to the third daughter, God would provide a lawful marriage for her, too. He was so sure of this, that he imagined his third daughter to have a dowry already in hand. He took courage in this expectation from the earlier circumstances of his two older daughters; indeed, he was so sure, that he stayed up and took care, when night came, to remain awake, so that he would not miss his benefactor, who had given him such riches. As soon he heard even the smallest noise that might signal the approach of his benefactor, he was ready to run to catch him with his two hands and thus learn who the person was who had left these bags of gold. With this plan in mind, the father anxiously looked for the arrival of his benefactor, whom he vigilantly awaited.

8. Indeed, as he expected, for a third time the true servant of God, Nicholas, appeared very late one night and, on his tiptoes, went to the usual place, from whence he once more threw a bag containing the same amount of gold coins. Very quickly he made ready to return to his house. But this time he was not able to avoid being noticed by the relentlessly vigilant father of the three girls. As soon as the father heard the noise from the sack falling, and seeing his wealthy patron and benefactor, he pursued him into the night.

As soon as he caught up with him, he was amazed, since he immediately recognized St. Nicholas, who was known not only for his virtue, but for his wealthy background. The man thus fell to the feet of St. Nicholas, warmly thanked him, and praised him as his savior and helper, since the Saint had succeeded, by his actions, in saving three souls who, by virtue of misfortune, would have been brought to the abyss of prostitution.

9. All of these things the father expressed with tears of thanksgiving and gratitude and with sincerity. St. Nicholas, however, was upset, since he had been found out by a man to whom he had shown his benefaction. He then raised him up and with kindness spoke to him; but at the same time, he warned him with fearful threats that he must not reveal

during the Saint's lifetime anything that had taken place or anything of the benefaction that he had been shown.

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. An Elder sent his disciple to Egypt to bring back a camel, so that they could transport the skete's baskets with it. As the disciple was bringing the camel, he met an ascetic Elder, who said to him: "If I had known that you were going to Egypt, I would have asked you to bring me a camel, too."

2. The disciple went immediately to his spiritual Father and told him about his meeting with the ascetic Elder. His spiritual Father, without further ado, gave the following command to his disciple: "Get the camel and take it to the Elder. Tell him that we have attended to our things, so that he can now take the camel to serve his needs. Go with him to Egypt to guide the animal, and when the Elder has finished his work, bring it back here, so that we can send our things to Egypt."

3. Indeed, the disciple did as the Elder directed, and having loaded the ascetic's baskets onto the camel, left for Egypt. When he had unloaded the baskets from the camel, the disciple said to the ascetic Elder: "Bless me, Father."

"Where are you going," the Elder asked him.

"To the skete, so that I can transport our own baskets."

When the ascetic Elder heard this, he was moved by the self-denial of the two monks. And with tears in his eyes, he made a prostration to the disciple, saying: "Please forgive me, for your immense love, which inspired you in this work of self-sacrifice, has touched me and outshines every fruit of my own monastic life."

4. The following event is told about a brother:

He had woven some baskets and was putting handles on them. At that moment, he heard a monk from a neighboring cell say, "What am I to do, with market day approaching and I have not yet prepared handles to put on my baskets?"

The brother immediately removed the handles from his own baskets and took them to his brother, telling him: "These, my brother, are leftovers. Take them." Thus, he helped his brother to complete his work, while his own work he left half-finished.

5. Two brothers in the skete were splitting flax fibers, so as to plait ropes. One of the brothers did not have such dexterity in his handiwork, and thus he was constantly breaking off one of the strands to be used to make the rope. These mishaps began to disturb the other monk, who was working together with him, and his ire was raised every time that the brother would break off one of the strands.

6. Wishing to subdue his anger and not to bring sorrow upon his co-worker, he thus, with an outburst of frustration, broke off one of his own strands of fibre, just as his brother had done to his. And the two then continued their work, tying knots in the flax fibers with which they were making ropes. Therefore, they finished their work without the one causing sorrow for the other and, above all, in such a way that the brother who was less dextrous in his handiwork would not notice the work of the other brother and be embarrassed.

* "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly" (St. Matthew 6:3-4).

Hypothesis XL

A pious man, whenever he sells or buys something, or engages in similar actions, should have God before his eyes and not occasion to cause harm to his neighbor, even if the latter should say that he has not suffered harm. As well, the young should be upright and not easily succumb to boldness. In the cœnobion, *they should not establish cliques, for these are deleterious.*

A. From the Life of St. Pachomios

1. A famine once befell the whole of Egypt, and wheat was nowhere to be found; and for this reason many suffered, among them the monks of the cœnobitic monastery of St. Pachomios. So, St. Pachomios sent a monk to go from city to city and village to village, with the hope of buying one hundred gold coins' worth of wheat.

2. The monk having gone to many areas without success, he at last arrived in a certain city in Egypt, called Hermonthis [an ancient, pre-Christian city on the Nile, near Thebes—*Editors*]. In this city, he found a very pious man, devoted to God. He was an administrative employee there, and he had heard often of the virtuous life of St. Pachomios. Now, this man managed the city's wheat supply.

3. St. Pachomios' monk thus approached this man and asked him if he would sell to them one hundred gold coins' worth of wheat. So, this administrator answered him, "I assure you, my brother, if I had wheat of my own, I would deprive my children of it and give it to you, so much do I admire what I have been told of your Divine and virtuous way of life. But heed what I am about to tell you: In the city storage rooms I have public stores of wheat which, up to the present, the Ruler of the city has not called for. If, then, you would like to take whatever you need, you may do so on the condition that, at the time of the new harvest, you will return in its place whatever you reap. In the meantime, I will look after the public supply and see that no one misses it."

4. At this proposal, the monk replied: "I do not wish to do such a

thing, for I may not have the ability to return the amount that I would like to take. But if possible, give me whatever amount of wheat you think is worth the one hundred gold coins that I will pay. You can keep the money until the new harvest and then replace the wheat, as long as this does not occasion compromising your position."

"I am able," said the keeper of the public storage house, "without risk to give you not only one hundred gold coins' worth of wheat, but more—perhaps twice that quantity. And you, for this favor, must pray for me."

"But I," the monk replied, "have money only for the specified amount; I have only one hundred gold coins."

But again the administrator said, "Do not worry about that. Take the wheat now, and when you have saved enough to pay the rest of the money, send it."

5. With this agreement, the monk filled the boat* with thirteen *artabas*** of wheat for one hundred gold coins, whereas nowhere in all of Egypt could one find wheat at a lower price than one hundred gold coins for five *artabas*. It was thus with great joy that the monk set out by boat for the monastery.

6. When St. Pachomios the Great was informed about the arrival of the boat carrying wheat and the manner in which it was purchased, he immediately sent another monk to the boat and ordered the following:

"Not even a grain of wheat will be delivered to the monastery, and the monk who bought it is not to enter into my presence, until he settles the matter of the wheat as he should have. By what he did, he committed an illicit act, not only in the manner in which he bought it at such a low price, but also because he bought more wheat, worth another one hundred gold coins, without my having given him permission to do so. He was overcome by the passion of greed and placed us in the position of being beholden to the man giving out wheat. He took advantage of this good man, without having the sense to keep within the boundaries of fulfilling only what was dictated by our needs. And not just that: succumbing to what was advantageous, he loaded down the ship without thinking that, had the ship sunk, we would all have had to become slaves to repay our debt.

7. "On this account, the brother who has acted thusly is ordered to offer the wheat that he bought on credit to the laymen living in the re-

gion, and this at the price at which he purchased it—i.e., at one hundred gold coins for thirteen *artabas*—and to give the money personally to the man who gave him the wheat on credit. He will afterwards purchase only as much wheat as the original one hundred gold coins will cover, and this at the price that everyone else has to pay. Only then may he come before me."

Indeed, the brother fulfilled the command of St. Pachomios the Great, buying wheat at one hundred gold coins per five and a half *artabas*, and only as much as one hundred coins would cover. After this event, St. Pachomios forbade this brother to go out of the monastery, in caring for the brotherhood, and assigned his obedience to another brother.

8. The same brother of the *cœnobion* did another, similar thing, which also shows his worldly spirit of greed.

Once the monastery shoemaker gave him some sandals and other things to sell. Now, the monk sold all of these items at a higher price than that which the shoemaker had assigned them. He returned to the shoemaker with the money. The shoemaker, having calculated the cost of the leather and added fifty cents for the days that it took to make the sandals, found that the money that the brother brought him was triple the amount. He forthwith went to St. Pachomios the Great and said: "To be sure, you did well, my Father, to limit this brother in his services to the monastery. He still has within him a worldly mentality."

"What did he do that was wrong?" St. Pachomios asked.

"I gave him," the shoemaker replied, "sandals and other items, assigning a price to each thing, so that he could sell them. He sold them at more than he should have—at three times the price—and thus brought me more than I had expected."

9. Having heard this, the Saint summoned the monk in question and asked him why he had done this. He said the following: "When I was approached, my Father, by those wishing to buy these items, I told them the price that the brother had assigned to them. They told me that, unless the items were stolen, they should sell at a higher price. When I heard this, I was embarrassed and tried to convince them into thinking otherwise, assuring them that the items were not stolen, but that I was ordered to sell them at the assigned price: 'But you can pay me what you wish.' And they gave me whatever price they thought sufficient, and I took it without counting it."

10. St. Pachomios, having heard this apology, did not deem it adequate, and said the following: "You sinned very greatly, since you wished to be greedy. However, run quickly and catch up with those who gave you so much money, so that you can return it to them. Then return and repent for your error. And no more will you go out of the *cœnobion*. You will stay here within its confines and do your handiwork, because it is not profitable for your soul, that you should carry out such an obedience."

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Poimen and the brothers with him were once making wicks.*** They were not able to continue this work, however, since they had fallen to such a state of economic deprivation, that they did not have enough money to buy flax fibers to continue their handiwork. So, one of those in St. Poimen's brotherhood, whom he had sent out from the skete on some matter, happened upon a merchant and discussed the issue with him. (Abba Poimen never took anything from anyone, in order not to burden others, and thus no one ever knew if he was suffering.)

2. This merchant, on learning of Abba Poimen's worries, and wishing to serve the Elder, pretended that he supposedly had need of wicks. Thus, he took his camel to the skete and loaded it down with wicks, which he bought at a good price, and went his way. As soon as the brother returned and learned what the merchant had done, he hastened to praise him for his service and said to Abba Poimen: "Father, that man had no need of these things; he took them solely in order to help us."

3. When Abba Poimen learned that the merchant took these things without really needing them, he immediately said, sternly: "Go hire a camel and bring back the things that the merchant purchased. If you do not do this, Poimen will no longer dwell together with you. I do not wish to do injustice to any man. Why should I without reason suffer harm, therefore, and be denied the spiritual benefit which proceeds from bearing up under difficulties?" The brother departed, found the merchant, and persuaded him—though with considerable difficulty—to take back his money and return to him the wicks that he had purchased. When the brother brought the wicks back to the skete, Abba Poimen rejoiced as if he had unexpectedly discovered some great treas-

ure.

4. A brother asked Abba Pistamon: "What should I do, Father, when I become upset over selling my handiwork?"

The Elder replied: "Abba Silouan and all of the brothers also sell their handiwork, yet this brings them no harm. However, when you sell yours, state the price only once, without haggling over it. Indeed, if you can, moderate the price. This calm and condescension will bring rest and tranquility to your soul."

5. The brother again said: "If I should be able to make enough money for needs from something else, are you of the opinion that I should no longer occupy myself with my handiwork?"

"Even if you have more at your disposal than you require to meet your needs," the Elder said, "never abandon your handiwork, but work as much you are able, though without destroying your tranquility of soul with your handiwork."

6. It is said of Abba Agathon and his disciple that they never haggled over prices. Thus, when they sold some object, they told the price to the buyer only once; after doing so, they took whatever they were given silently and were very happy with it. By the same token, when they happened to be buying something, they readily and without comment gave what was asked of them, taking what they bought without saying a word.

*From Father Paul Evergetinos*****

It is this which we should admire and emulate in the Saint above all: that is, that he had great trust in God and did not in the least feel anxiety about worldly concerns. One who can attain to the same degree of trust and indifference to worldly needs as the Saint can assuredly, then, bring to fruition the same works that he accomplished.

C. From St. Isaiah

1. When you go into the city to sell your handiwork, do not start haggling over the price, as worldly people do. Rather, sell it at what is offered, so that you do not lose the strength of soul which you have garnered by quiet work in your cell.

2. As well, when you occasion to purchase something that you need, do not, once more, haggle over the price with the seller; if you truly need it and have the money, force yourself a little and buy it. If, again, you do not have the money to purchase it, leave it and go away without comment.

3. If, once more, your mind should become beset by the thought, "Where will I get the kind of money that the merchant is asking?" say to yourself: "Am I not also like the Saints, whom God tested by poverty and who were rewarded by God with comfort and ease for their good intentions?"

D. From St. Ephraim

1. Do not go into your brother's cell without first knocking on the door, so that he can permit you to enter, so as not to upset him from your uninvited appearance.

2. Do not be joined in vows of long-lasting friendship with another brother; maintain only the harmonious ties that rise out of the fear of God.

3. It is a matter of incalculable harm for a monk to engage in forming cliques; this will one day bring him sadness and regret.

E. From St. Barsanouphios

1. A brother asked an ascetic Elder: "Is it good for me to be friendly with those of the same age?"

The Elder answered: "It is a good thing for you to have no friendships at all with those of like age. Give heed to the reason: the disposition of soul felt by a monk who experiences friendship impedes the soul in feeling contrition. Therefore, do not be friends with those who are your age or with anyone, since this will take away this contrition. Keep in mind that no one can attain to a worthy good without feeling contrite and without putting forth fierce efforts. Strip your eyes of anything that might dispose you towards particular attachment to any person; thereby, you will protect your heart from outspokenness and boldness, which are a threat and frightful and which destroy all of a monk's spiritual fruits."

2. The brother again said, "Then I ask you, my Father, to explain to me what should be the extent of a brother's love for his brother."

The Elder responded: "My child, the love of a father for his child is one thing; the love of a brother for his brother is another. The love of a spiritual Father for his spiritual child is not one of blood and does not, therefore, entail harm of any kind; for the spiritual Father is concerned with, and is protected by, spiritual thoughts and a lofty mentality, such that he takes pains, whether with words or with his works, to benefit the young in all things. Nourishing them with such spiritual love and relieved of every risk of pettiness, he does not hide from the young their shortcomings, but censures them spiritually and corrects them with instruction in a Christ-like way. Through these spiritual Fathers, what is written comes to fruition: 'Reprove, rebuke, exhort' (II St. Timothy 4:2)—just as your spiritual Father does with you, even if you may not so perceive it.

3. "Since his love for you does not, therefore, silence him with regard to your faults, but he chides you in a paternal way, it is obvious that his love is truly spiritual. Each person loves his neighbor in his own way; the true measure of one's love of neighbor, however, is to love, after God, your neighbor as you love yourself: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself' (St. Matthew 22:39).

4. "The young must be protected from all things, for very swiftly will the Devil entrap the youthful. First of all, he leads them away by their associations: they begin to speak with one another for the sake of spiritual benefit. Losing no time, however, they begin, through the energy of the Devil, to go on to other things, such as mutual enticement, shameless talk, too much laughter, judgmentalism, and other such evils. To such circumstances, the words of the Apostle are rightly applied: 'Having begun in spirit, are ye now made perfect by the *flesh?'* [Galatians 3:3]. From foolish love and from such associations come forth the falls of the young.

5. "The measure of love between the young should be: that one not judge the other; that he not show another disdain, or degrade him; for one not to seek what is in his own personal interest, but to prefer that which brings peace to his brother, rather than to himself; not to love another because he is handsome or because he provides material benefits; and for youth not to stay together, except for serious reasons, so as not

to achieve looseness in conversation, which is so destructive to the spiritual fruits of a monk, as we said above, making him a withered tree.

6. "But precisely as they keep watch over themselves and protect themselves from outspokenness and babble, the young should likewise look after the conscience of their brothers and avoid being together with one another, except on good grounds, so as not to be ensnared by such traps and so as not to ensnare their brothers thereby, thus calling down on themselves the prophetic lament: 'Woe to him that giveth his neighbor to drink the thick lees of wine' (Abbacum 2:15). The same thought is expressed in the words of the Apostle: 'Evil communications corrupt good manners' (I Corinthians 15:33). This is the measure of love between brothers."

* The transport of goods on the Nile River took place on river boats.

** "*Artaba*": A Persian unit of measure equal to about twenty [more accurately, sixteen—*Editors*] of today's kilograms.

*** Waxed thread, used for making candles.

**** In the modern Greek text of *The Evergetinos*, these words by Monk Paul are set off as a separate entry. We have appropriately presented them as textual commentary—*Editors*.

Hypothesis XLI

How we should act towards visitors and how we should receive and speak with them.

A. From St. Palladios

1. We once set out from Egypt to Jerusalem. We immediately went to meet with St. Apollo the Great. Now, the disciples of Abba Apollo came running with joy to greet us, singing hymns, since they had the custom of receiving any monks who visited them with psalmody. And immediately they did a prostration to the ground and kissed us. After these signs of spiritual attentiveness, some went ahead of us and others followed us, chanting, until we reached the Elder.

2. As soon as Father Apollo heard the psalmody, he received us in the way that he received all brothers who came to see him, first reverencing us with a prostration to the ground, kissing us, and then leading us to his cell, where he said a prayer, washed our feet with his own hands, and invited us to rest. This attentiveness was shown not only to us, but was habitually shown to all.

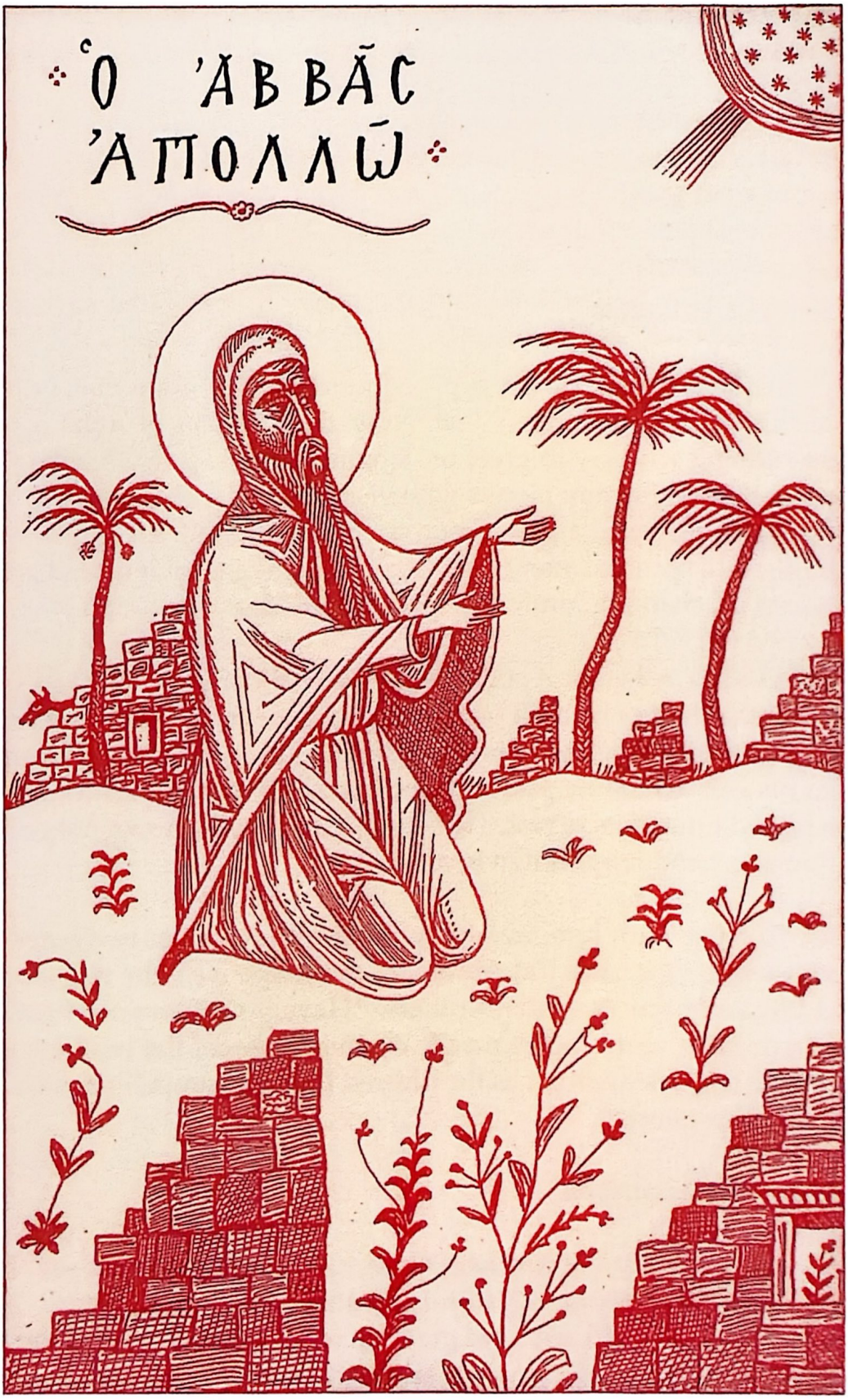
3. To those with him, he always said that we must reverence the brothers who visit us as did Abraham, as though we were reverencing God Himself by way of the brothers: "Have you seen your brother? Then you have seen God Himself. We must compel the brothers who visit us to take rest with us, as the Blessed Lot did, compelling even Angels to be his guests."

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. An Elder said: "If brothers come to visit you and you see them from afar, before they arrive, stand still and say a prayer."

Say, "Lord Jesus Christ, save me from condemnation and gossip and let them leave from here in peace and with love."

2. Someone once posed the following query to Abba Peter, the dis-



Abba Apollo

ciple of Abba Lot: "When I am alone in my cell, my soul is at peace; however, when someone visits me and relates to me the concerns and words of those outside, immediately my soul is disturbed."

Abba Peter replied thusly: "Abba Lot says that with your key, you open my door."

3. The brother did not understand the meaning of this and asked again, "What does this mean?"

"Pay attention, so that you will understand: When someone visits you, you say, 'How are you? From where are you coming? How are the brothers? Are they caring for you, or not?' With such questions do you not open the door to your brother, thereby to hear all that you do not want to hear?"

4. The brother said: "Indeed, it is so; however, what is one to do, when a brother visits him?"

The Elder replied: "The best lesson and the most harmonious manner of conversing is spiritual sorrow according to Christ. Where this contrition is absent, it is impossible to be protected from any kind of sin."

5. The brother once more spoke: "When I am in my cell, I feel this salvific sorrow; but when someone visits or when I go out of my cell, this sorrow departs from me."

And once again the Elder answered him: "This happens because you have not actually been established in this contrition. You draw on it when it is convenient, and superficially so. Those who have been truly established in sorrow do not lose it."

6. Another Elder said the following: "When a brother visits you, do not show, by the look on your face, that you feel spiritual sorrow in Christ; hide this virtue within your heart until the brother departs. Then, after his departure, take up again the contrite task of acquiring spiritual sorrow; for the demons flee from your presence when they see you showing sorrow for your sins."

C. From St. Ephraim

1. Monk, should another brother or a lay person visit you, do not look after him with greater means than you have, so that you do not re-

gret, after he leaves, what you have expended in caring for him. Offer him that which the Lord has provided you, for an offering in love of simple greens, as a sign of hospitality, is preferable to rich fare that will cause you to worry: "For God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7).

2. I say these things, my brother, not because I wish to restrain your hospitality, but to see that your offering is gladly accepted by God, and clearly so, in keeping with the adage: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (I St. Peter 4:9).

3. Take care, Monk, not to wish to be liked by those of a worldly mind, thus losing the way in which a monk must live. Do all of your work with fear of God; whatever you do for the love of the Lord is profitable: "Meat for the belly, and the belly for meat: but God shall destroy both it and them" (I Corinthians 6:13).

4. My beloved, if you show hospitality to someone in your cell, try to see that he leaves without being scandalized by you. This you will accomplish if you do nothing without the fear of God, such that you do not appear to your visitors to be an example of that worker who toils at senseless tasks. For the Apostle says: "Give no one offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God" (I Corinthians 10:32).

5. Honor all men, not so that they will repay you in kind, but for the sake of the Lord. The man who pleases other men takes care that everyone should like him and consequently is not stable of character or in his spirituality. He, however, who reveres the Lord never stumbles but goes forth guided by the light of His Commandments.

D. From Abba Isaiah

1. If a monk unknown to you should come to your cell, greet him with a smiling face and with a kiss of peace. If he is carrying something, immediately take it, so as to give him rest. As he leaves, do the same. Do not allow your farewell kiss of peace to be warm, and do not accompany it with too much familiarity; let it be subdued in the fear of God, so as not to cause damage to the soul of your visitor.

2. Be careful not to ask him about things that will not benefit his soul. Urge him to give the blessing, and let this be your only conversation. After that, take him a book to read. If he should come from afar after an arduous journey, or from some exhausting labor, force him to rest; and wash his feet, as well.

3. If he should, indeed, discuss anything that is not of God, say to him lovingly: "Forgive me, my brother, for I am ill and cannot properly attend to this discussion." Again, if your visitor is a beggar and you are at the time offering hospitality to some faithful, do not escort him into their presence, so as not to bother them; in private, offer him your charity, as you are able, for the love of God.

4. If the visiting brother, once more, is a wayfarer, wandering in the name of God, and he is visiting you to take rest, do not turn him away; rather, joyfully receive him and show him hospitality together with anyone else who is visiting you. If he is poor, do not let him depart without giving him something. Give to him from the blessings that God has sent you; for you should know that what you have is not yours, but gifts from God.

5. To the faithful who visit you, being always joyful, set a table for them. Serve them yourself, so that they will enjoy themselves. And when they finish their food, insist that they eat again—a second and a third time—saying to them with sweetness, "Please, brothers, please do me the favor of eating a little more."

6. If, in the services, the brothers sing along with you, do not neglect to ask each of them to sing in a modest way and in turn, so as not to bicker over the psalmody. And if a stranger should visit at the times of services, ask him to give the blessing, without, however, placing him in an uncomfortable position; insist up to three times and afterwards remain silent.

7. If brothers should visit you from another place, do not let yourself discuss or ask questions about matters that are not beneficial to the soul, as I said previously, so that you do not remain, once they have left your cell, captive to circumstances of soul that your various aimless discussions might have occasioned. If, ultimately, one of those who are visiting you cannot control himself and says something to someone that is

harmful, keep anyone who heard it from passing it to someone outside your circle, so as not to fill the soul of another brother with deadly poison.

8. Do not let yourself learn about the deeds of others, on such occasions, so as not to make yourself into an outhouse, where everyone goes to deposit the contents of his bowels and which, on this account, stinks unbearably. On the contrary, try to resemble an altar of God, where your mind, kept in purity, will be like a Priest, offering incense on this sacred altar of the heart, morning and evening, that your inward altar will not be bereft of incense.*

9. Compel yourself to pray vigorously and with contrition before God, so that you will be given simplicity and uprightness of character, removing from upon yourself those contrary passions, that is, craftiness, wisdom of a satanic kind, evil curiosity, and passions similar thereto.

10. Finally, from the foregoing, we may draw the following conclusion: When one conscientiously reveres God, then that which one hears he submits to his conscience, which in turn takes care to enlighten him in accord with the Will of God. Such a man God will teach in an unfathomable manner, in the depths of his heart, about the loftiest matters most Divine, to which I referred above. If there is not found therein a master, then the poor man whose house is left free to the service of just anyone at all says whatever he wishes, for the heart is not indentured to the master of the house, but to the passions—those enemies of the soul.**

11. If a monk unknown to you should visit you, and you immediately form the impression that he takes too much care over his physical appearance, do not probe him on the matter in conversation, but let his shortcoming become apparent to you in due course.

E. From St. Barsanouphios

1. An Elder gave the following advice to his disciples: If someone should come to your cell, or you to the cell of another, and he asks that you give a blessing, at first avoid doing so; if, however, he asks you three times, say, "Forgive me, but I am not worthy." If, however, he insists be-

yond three times, then with humility do as he asks of you. Likewise, you should request something of someone else three times; if then he does not wish to do what you ask, leave him alone and do not insist further. Wrangling over some issue is a bad thing.

2. Thus, should you wish to keep something belonging to another, or if you wish to use something which is someone else's, ask him as many as three times. If he does not assent to your request, then do not disturb him anymore. Quietly cease bothering him. This is the true way of God.

3. It benefits a monk nothing to ask about this or that person. For by way of such inquiries, he distracts his mind from prayer to, and the contemplation of, God and diverts it to condemning others, to superfluous matters, or to cupidity, making it captive to the passions and his shortcomings. So, there is no better thing than silence and brevity of speech, as necessity dictates.

* This beautiful image reminds us of the contrite metaphor of Psalm 140[:2]: "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense."

** Abba Isaiah compares the soul to a house and the mind with the master of the house. In this beautiful, yet graphic, image, he wishes to emphasize the need for caution in what we say and what we hear.

Hypothesis XLII

During the visits of Godly brothers, many of the Fathers, to refresh their visitors, mildly relaxed their asceticism, without being harmed thereby, since they were dispassionate; some of them would later chastise themselves for this small relaxation. He who maintains his asceticism during visits and consolatory encounters, or relaxes it somewhat, is worthy of praise from those who judge correctly; but we should not give credence to those who compel themselves more than necessary in consolatory encounters.

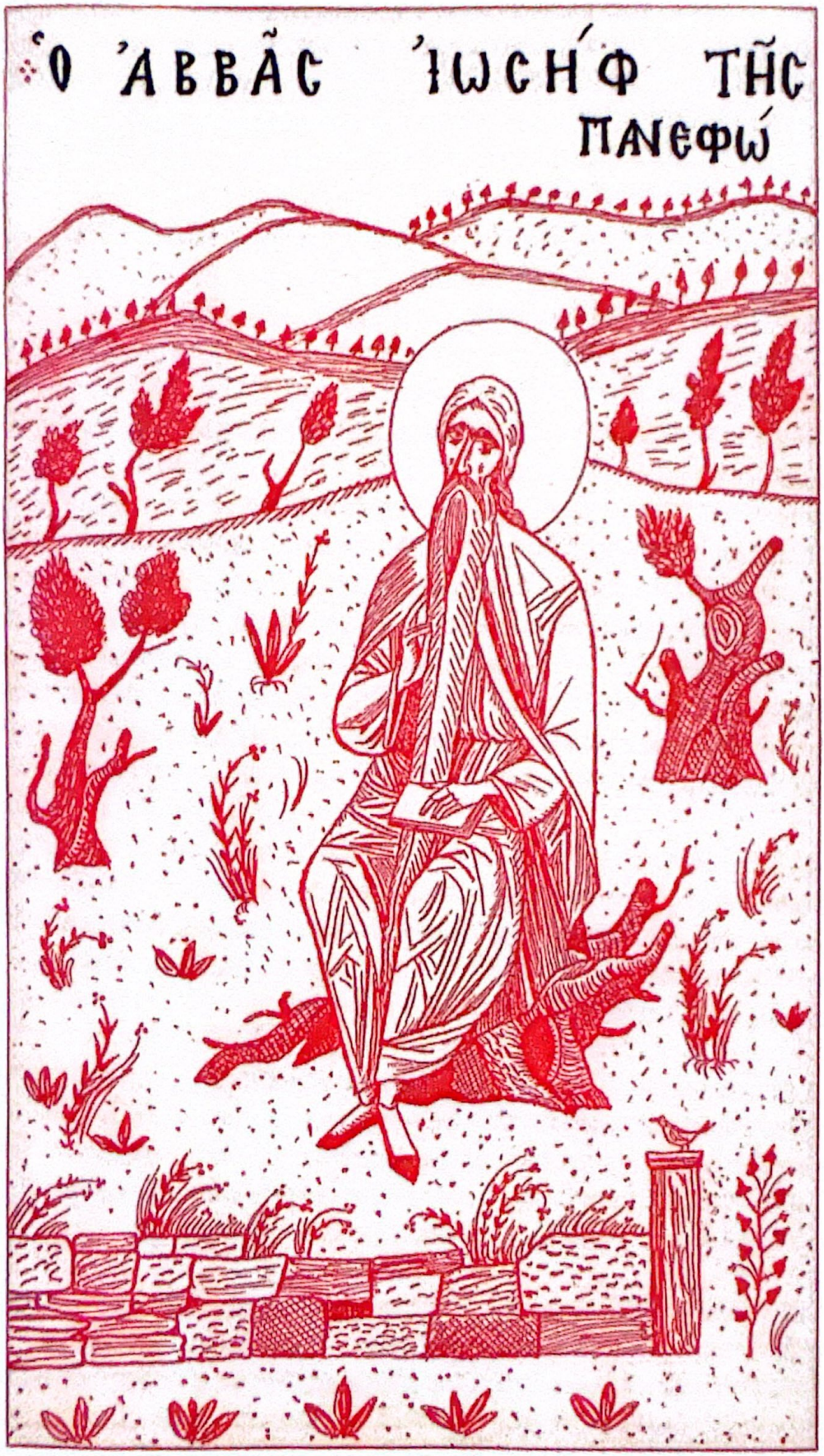
A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Some of the Fathers once visited Abba Joseph, who lived in Panepho, in order to ask him how they should behave towards brothers whom they were entertaining and whether it was necessary to make a condescension from ascetic strictness so as to look after them.

2. After welcoming them and urging them to sit down, the Elder, before they even asked him anything, went into his cell and put on some very shabby clothing, of the kind worn by beggars, came out, and walked among them. He then went back into his cell and put on his own garments, after which he came out and sat down with them.

3. The brothers were astonished at the Elder's behavior. The Elder said to them: "Did you notice what I did?" "Yes," they said. The Elder asked them: "Was I changed because I wore different sets of clothing?" "No," replied the brothers. The Elder then said to them: "In such a way, then, we are not harmed by receiving brothers, even if we relax our customary rule of fasting for their sake.

4. "When brothers visit, let us receive them with liberality and relaxation; when we are by ourselves again, then let us take care to cultivate mourning, so that it may remain steadfastly within us." When the visiting monks heard this teaching, they were amazed, because the Elder had told them what was in their hearts before they asked him about it; and for this reason they glorified God.



Abba Joseph of Panepho

5. Once an order was given in Sketis that the monks should fast for a week. It so happened that some brothers from Egypt visited Abba Moses that week, and for their sake he had prepared a little cooked food. As soon as his neighbors saw the smoke coming from his cell, they told the clergy: "Look, Moses has violated the commandment regarding the fast and cooked food in his cell." The clergy replied: "When he comes, we will speak to him about the matter."

6. When Saturday arrived, Moses came to Church along with the other Fathers. The clergy, perceiving the remarkable way of life that Moses led, said to him in the presence of all: "Abba Moses, you have broken the commandment of men, but you have kept God's commandment of love [*cf.* Hebrews 13:2]."

7. A brother visited Abba Poimen during the third week of Great Lent. After confessing his thoughts and gaining spiritual relief, he said to the Elder: "I was almost prevented from coming here today." "Why so?" asked the Elder. "I thought you might not open your door to me," replied the brother, "because of the Great Fast." The Elder answered: "We have not been taught to close the wooden door of our cell, but rather the door of the tongue."

8. A brother visited a certain anchorite. After conversing with him and obtaining peace of mind, as he departed he said to the anchorite: "Forgive me, Abba, for I have impeded you from keeping your rule." "My rule," replied the Elder, "is for me to give relief to your soul and to send you on your way in peace."

9. It was said of a certain Elder that he dwelt in Syria beside the road that leads to the desert and that he occupied himself with the following work: whenever any monk was passing by on his way from the desert, whatever the hour might be, out of the goodness of his heart he offered him hospitality.

10. One time it happened that a certain anchorite was passing by; the Elder ran up to him and invited him to come to his cell and rest. But the anchorite refused to accept his proposal, saying: "I am fasting and feel unable to break my fast." Grieved by this refusal, the monk said to the anchorite: "I beseech you, do not despise your servant; if you want, come and let us at least pray." The anchorite yielded to such insistence

and entered the monk's cell. After they had prayed, the Elder offered him refection. He then saw the anchorite off, with great thanksgiving for this opportunity to show hospitality.*

11. Abba Cassian recounted that at one time he and those with him were passing from Palestine into Egypt to visit one of the Fathers. After he had given them hospitality, they asked him the following question: "Why, Father, when you entertain brothers from foreign parts, do you not keep the rule of fasting as we have received it by tradition in Palestine?"

12. The Elder responded: "I always have the opportunity to fast; but you I do not always have with me [*cf.* St. John 12:8]. The fast is certainly useful and necessary; but it depends on our choice. However, the law of God demands without fail that we put love of neighbor into practice. Therefore, when we receive you, we receive Christ Himself in you [*cf.* St. Matthew 10:40], and so we are obligated to look after you with all diligence. When I bid farewell to you, then I can resume my rule of fasting once again. For, as it says in the Gospel, "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast" (St. Matthew 9:15).

13. The same Abba Cassian recounted another similar incident: "We visited another Elder, and he made us eat. Although we had eaten our fill, he urged us to eat more. When I protested that I could not eat anything else, the Elder answered: 'I have already put out food six times for brothers who came at different times.** In order to encourage each of them to eat, I ate with them, and I am still hungry. Have you, then, eaten your fill after just one serving, such that you cannot eat anything else?'"

From Father Paul Evergetinos

When you read the incident related above, reflect on the attentiveness and exactitude of the Elder: in order to put his guests at their ease and to give the impression of eating with them, he simply tasted the foods, without eating to satiety. For if, having eaten six times that same day, he was still hungry, it is clear that he was not eager to satisfy a bodily need, but touched the food that was set before him, as I said, only

lightly. Whoever, then, can act in this way, let him eat with all, for he will not be harmed at all himself, whereas he will benefit the others.***

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Two brothers once visited an Elder. This Elder had the custom of not eating every day. When he saw the brothers, he rejoiced and said: "Fasting has its own reward, but he who eats out of love for his brother fulfills two commandments." For the Elder both set aside his own will and offered refreshment to the brothers, thereby fulfilling the commandment of love for one's neighbor.

2. Concerning Abba Makarios the following is told: Whenever he happened to eat with the brothers of the skete, he imposed the following rule on himself: "If wine is put out, drink it for the sake of the brothers, but in return for one cup of wine, when alone in your cell, go for one day without drinking water."

3. The brothers, unaware of the Elder's resolution, would give him wine for the sake of hospitality, and the Elder would joyfully accept it, so that he might mortify himself. His disciple, knowing what the Elder did when he was by himself, told the brothers: "For the Lord's sake, do not give him any wine; otherwise, he is going to torment himself in his cell." When the brothers learned of the ascetic work that the Elder performed in secret, they no longer offered him wine.

4. Abba Silouan and his disciple Zacharias once visited a certain monastery. The brothers obliged them to eat a little before setting off. When they had left the monastery and were on their way home, the disciple found some water beside the road and asked the Elder whether he would permit him to drink it. The Elder said: "It is a fast today, Zacharias." "But have we not already eaten, Father?" asked the disciple. The Elder replied: "When we ate at the monastery, it was for the sake of love; let us now keep our own fast, my son."

5. They said of Abba Serinos that he used to work hard and always ate just two rusks a day. Abba Joseph,**** his companion and himself a great ascetic, once went to see Abba Serinos and said to him: "When I am in my cell, I keep my rule punctiliously; but if I go out, I make concessions for the sake of the brothers. What do you think? Am I doing

right or not?"

6. The Elder replied to him: "There is no great virtue in keeping to your regimen when you are in your cell. Rather, it is when you go out of your cell, and do not relax your rule, that you deserve great praise for your virtue."

7. Some monks from Sketis once visited Amma Sarah, and she set a basket of fruit before them. They left the good fruit and ate the rotten. She told them: "You are truly monks of Sketis."

8. A feast [oblation]***** was once celebrated on Abba Anthony's mountain. Now, a container of wine was left there. One of the Elders took a small jug of this wine and a cup, carried them to Abba Sisoes, and offered him a cup of wine. He took it and drank it. The Elder likewise offered him a second cup, which he also accepted. When he was offered a third glass, however, he did not take it, but said: "Stop, brother. Or are you not aware of the existence of Satan?"

9. If, therefore, someone like Abba Sisoes—who over a period of many years happened on just one occasion to relax the rigor of his asceticism by drinking wine—not only did not overstep the mark, but even unabashedly and openly said "no" to the monk who was urging him to partake of more wine than was appropriate, admitting—he who was the most dispassionate of the dispassionate—that he was afraid of the Enemy's warfare, how much more should we, who partake daily of wine and various kinds of food, not to mention being always filled to satiety, not pay attention to, or obey, those who compel us to violate our rule. Indeed, we should dismiss such a demand as manifest harm and ruination for the soul, lest we who live carelessly add prodigality to the habitual satiety in which we constantly indulge and, by overloading the ship of our mind with excessive cargo, in a short time cause certain shipwreck for ourselves through the winds of the passions that blow on us from without.

10. It is said of Abba Sisoes the Theban that he did not eat bread, but that on the Feast of Pascha the brethren made a prostration to him and implored him to eat with them. In response to them, the Elder said: "I can do one of two things: I can either eat bread or partake of the delicacies that you have prepared." They said to him: "Eat only bread." And

he did just that.

11. Every year a certain God-loving Bishop would visit the Fathers in Sketis. One year, one of the brothers met him and took him to his cell. Setting bread and salt before him, he said: "Forgive us, for we do not have anything else to offer you." The Bishop said to him: "I want, when I come next year, not to find even salt."

12. Once a pitcher of wine from the new vintage was brought to the Cells, so that each of the brothers might be given a cup of wine. One of the brothers, not wishing to take any, sought refuge in a beehive hut.• However, when he stepped inside the hut, it caved in, though without killing him; in fact, it merely grazed him.

13. On account of the noise, the other brothers ran to find out what had happened. They saw the collapsed hut and the brother standing beside it and began to upbraid him, saying: "You vainglorious man, it serves you right." But the Abba of the skete took the brother to himself and said: "Leave my son alone, for he has done a good deed. As the Lord lives, this hut shall not be rebuilt in my lifetime, so that the world might learn that a hut in the Cells caved in because someone refused a cup of wine."

14. An Elder said: "If you are still young, avoid wine as if it were a serpent. Even if you are compelled to drink wine at an *agape* meal, drink a small amount and then stop. Even if those who have invited you adjure you to partake, pay no heed to their adjurations. For oftentimes Satan puts pressure on monks, and even senior ones, to force the young into winebibbery and gluttony. But as for you, do not give in to them; for wine and women separate monks from God."

15. An Elder who was going to Sketis was accompanied by a certain brother. When it came time for them to part company, the Elder said to the brother: "Let us eat together, brother." It was morning and the beginning of the week. So, after eating, they arose and went on their way.

16. Very early on Saturday morning, the Elder went to visit that brother and asked him: "Have you been hungry, brother, since we ate?" "No," answered the brother, "for I have eaten every day, and so I am not hungry." The Elder said to him: "To be honest, my son, I have not

eaten since then." On hearing this, the brother was moved to compunction and greatly edified.

From Father Paul Evergetinos

Observe how wisely the Elder acted, chastising himself in private for a small relaxation of his rule and edifying the brother. In so doing, he was either urging the brother to imitate himself in such ascesis, to the extent that he was able; or, if he was unable, making sure that he was not resentful of others undertaking a similar feat; or, lacking such strength, making sure that he should not find fault with the Elder but, on the contrary, seeing the superior stamina of the Elder, humble himself.

* For a different ending to this anecdote, see the following: "Look, there is a tree here; let us obey the one to whom it bows when he kneels in prayer. The anchorite, therefore, knelt in prayer, and nothing happened. The hospitable monk also knelt, and at once the tree bowed towards him. Edified by this, they gave thanks to God" (*Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. III, p. 434 [chapter 13, §28])—*Editors.*

** I have restored the words, "at different times"—which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from *Ἀποφθέγματα Γερόντων*, ed. Panagiotes Chrestou (Thessaloniki: Paterikai Ekdoseis "Gregorios ho Palamas," 1978), p. 372—*Trans.*

*** In connection with this annotation by the ever-memorable Father Paul Evergetinos, we should also be aware of the following point: when the desert Fathers who were offering hospitality relaxed their fasting for the sake of entertaining guests, it had nothing do to with the kind of food, since this was always very frugal and lenten, consisting, for the most part, of rusks—and aged ones, at that— and a few groats or pulses. Whenever they relaxed their fasting, they would add a little olive oil and, on very infrequent occasions, cheese. Other kinds of food did not exist in the desert. Relaxations of fasting, therefore, pertained not to the kind of food, but to the time at which it was eaten. The Fathers normally ate once a day, partaking of uncooked food [*ξηροφαγία*—*Trans.*]. Ascetics ate once every two or three days, or even less frequently. For the sake of guests, they would put out a meal even before the normal hour, that is, in the evening of a given day. This is the meaning, in this context, of a relaxation of the fast [*κατάλυσις/λύσις νηστείας*—*Trans.*], for "*νηστεία*" denotes a complete abstinence from food.

**** Abba Job, in other versions of this story—*Editors.*

***** See the endnotes for Hypothesis XVIII, "oblation," Book II.

• "*Θόλος*" (*tholos*): "A round building with a conical roof. Such buildings were common in rural areas and were used for storing animal feed, cooking vessels, etc. Apparently it was in such a hut, probably of makeshift construction, that the brother in question attempted to hide for the sake of abstinence, in order to avoid drinking wine" (*Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. II, p. 80, n. 53)—*Editors.*

Hypothesis XLIII

That one should not casually allow visitors to a cœnobion, *even if they are monks, to converse or associate with the brothers; and how the brothers in a cœnobion should behave towards visitors.*

A. From the Life of St. Pachomios

1. A good clergyman by the name of Dionysios, Steward of the Church in Tyre and a friend of St. Pachomios, hearing that the Saint did not permit monks visiting him from other monasteries to associate with the brothers under him, but required visitors to stay in another place by the gates of the monastery, was sorely distressed. He subsequently visited Pachomios, and while they were conversing, rebuked him for this policy, saying: "You do wrong, Abba, in not having the same attitude towards visiting monks that you have towards your own monks."

2. With great forbearance and meekness, Pachomios replied to him as follows: "God knows that I have never wished to grieve or disdain any man. How, then, could I now dare to do this and arouse the Lord to anger against me when He explicitly exclaims: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me'? (St. Matthew 25:40).

3. "Believe me when I tell you, Father, that I have not instituted this policy out of any disdain for visiting monks, but because this monastery has many novices who do not yet understand what the monastic *schema* means. Among them are also children who are so simple-minded that they do not even know their right from their left. Thus, I have deemed it more profitable for the brothers under me to live apart from visiting monks and for the latter to do likewise.

4. "Indeed, I reckon it an honor for Fathers and brothers who visit us to assemble with us at the hour of prayer, but thereafter for each to repair to his appointed place and observe silence, while I, with God's help, attend to their needs."

5. When he heard this explanation from Pachomios, the Presbyter Dionysios repented and apologized to him, for he knew that the Saint did everything according to the Will of God. Exceedingly pleased by all that he heard from Abba Pachomios in his defense, he returned home rejoicing.

B. From St. Barsanouphios

1. A brother asked an Elder: "When people visit our *cœnobion*, be they laymen or spiritual Fathers, and they make soul-profiting remarks, should I stay and listen to them and ask about something that might concern me? What is your opinion?"

2. The Elder replied: "Brother, he who is truly a disciple of Christ has no authority over himself to do anything of his own accord. Even if he thinks that he might derive some benefit from meeting with visitors, still he transgresses the commandment which says: 'Do all things with counsel' (*cf.* Ecclesiasticus 32:19).* What more are you going to hear than what the Fathers have said? Now, if there are some visitors who speak the word of God, ask your Abba with humility: 'Abba, do you want me to stay and listen to them, or depart?' Whatever he tells you, do that with peace of mind. If you want to ask someone about some matter, whether he be a monk or a layman, speak first to your Abba about it. If he sees fit, he will ask the question for you; if he tells you, 'Ask him yourself,' then ask."

3. The brother asked: "If I have nothing to ask, but I happen to encounter a visitor who asks *me* about something, what do you bid me do?"

4. The Elder replied: "When you encounter anyone, confine yourself to a greeting and then say, 'Pray for me, for I am on an errand,' and depart. If he asks you about something and you know the answer, tell him concisely and be on your way. If you do not know the answer, say, 'I do not know,' and go. If you know that one of your companions or your neighbor is capable of answering the question better than you, refer the questioner to him."

5. The brother asked: "If a visitor finds me sitting down or working, and sits down next to me or tries to start a conversation with me, what

should I do?"

6. The Elder replied: "If he finds you sitting somewhere and comes up to you, ask him for a blessing and do the same as before: say to him, 'Pray for me,' and withdraw. If he practically grasps onto you in his desire to talk to you, say to him: 'Forgive me, for I have a commandment not to talk to anyone without the knowledge of the Abba. But I will report everything to him and do whatever he tells me.' If someone comes and sits beside you while you are working, excuse yourself on the grounds that you have an obedience to perform and stand up."

7. The brother asked: "What, then, did Abba Isaiah mean when he said, 'After greeting a guest, ask him how he is and then sit down with him in silence'?"**

8. The Elder replied: "This was said to an Elder who was advanced both in age and in spiritual stature. A conscientious disciple, who yearns to become a true monk, guards himself from such encounters, which give rise to negligence, laxity, insubordination, and perilous familiarity. As the well-known saying goes, 'John does not have time for these things,' meaning that one should not be distracted by anyone."

9. The brother asked: "One thought says to me: 'Cut off meetings with others immediately and you will be freed from distractions.' Another thought says to me: 'Cut them off gradually, lest those who know you become dismayed.' Tell me, then, which is the better course to follow?"

10. The Elder replied: "If you cut off such meetings immediately, you will have freedom from distractions. If you opt, however, to cut them off gradually, you will create occasions for further conversation and engender misgivings in those with whom you used to associate: occasions for conversation, since you will say to yourself, 'Since he talked to me first, I will talk to him,' and misgivings, since your interlocutor will be suspicious of you and say, 'Does he have something against me, so that he no longer speaks with me anymore?' Resolve to cut off these meetings immediately, and God will come to your aid."

11. The brother asked: "Since I have the duty of infirmarian, and sick persons sometimes visit the *cœnobion* asking for some item from the in-

firmary, I am permitted by the Abba to give them what they need. I am for this reason obligated to talk to them. Could it be that I am doing these things by my own will?"

12. The Elder replied: "Regarding visitors who are ill and need something from the infirmary, if you give them what they request,*** you are not at fault, since you have been commanded to do this and are not following your own will. However, you should beware, lest on this pretext you start babbling with one of these visitors or prolong your conversation, taking advantage of the fact that you are attending to someone's needs. For sometimes it may happen that you should ask a visitor about some matter, or about purchasing medicine, and not confine your questions to essential points but extend the conversation to include irrelevant topics. Be careful, therefore, that you do not give occasion to some evil desire. Guard against this and you will be at peace."

C. From St. Ephraim

Brother, the Lord has appointed you a shepherd. Do not allow pernicious wolves to enter His flock, lest they devastate the flock under your care; for if you do, you will have to give account to the Chief Shepherd. Drive away from your sheep everything that does not bring them benefit, but rather harm and ruin.

* I have, here, followed the version of the quotation from Ecclesiasticus printed in *Βαρσανουφίου καὶ Ἰωάννου Ἐρωταποκρίσεις (ΣΛ'-ΦΚΒ')*, ed. Stavroula Zachariadou (Thessaloniki: Paterikai Ekdoseis "Gregorios ho Palamas," 1988), p. 150—*Trans.*

** See Abba Isaiah, "Discourse III," in *Ascetic Discourses*, trans. John Chryssavgis and Pachomios Penkett (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2002), p. 50—*Editors.*

*** Reading "ἐὰν ἐπίσης δώσῃς" rather than "ἐὰν ἐπίσης δηλώσῃς τῷ Ἀββᾷ" (see *Βαρσανουφίου καὶ Ἰωάννου Ἐρωταποκρίσεις [ΣΛ'-ΦΚΒ']*, ed. Stavroula Zachariadou [Thessaloniki: Paterikai Ekdoseis "Gregorios ho Palamas," 1988], p. 154)—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XLIV

That we should not eat with irreligious people; and as for those who ask us questions and do not put our advice into practice, we should avoid them after the first or second meeting.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Makarios said to some brothers who were visiting him and who had asked him what they should do to be saved: "My dear brothers, let us avoid encounters with worldly people as much as we can. Indeed, this is very beneficial for us. For their conversation revolves, for the most part, around buying and selling, their wives and children, their livestock, and the like. Such conversation separates our minds from God. Moreover, let us not even eat together with them.

2. "For since their conversation alone separates our minds from God, how much more harm there is in eating and drinking with them. I do not mean that we should avoid them as being unclean*—God forbid! What I mean is this: worldly people eat all kinds of foods, including meat, twice or thrice a day, whereas we abstain from meat and other kinds of food and eat only once a day. Furthermore, if they see us eating to satiety, they immediately condemn us, saying, 'Look, monks gorge themselves,' while forgetting that we, too, are clad in flesh just as they are.

3. "However, if they see us practicing abstemiousness in what we eat, they immediately judge us and say: 'Look, they are pleasers of men,' and they destroy their souls on our account. Likewise, if they see us eating with unwashed hands or wearing dirty clothing, they immediately say: 'What slovenly individuals!' If they see us eating after we have washed our hands, they say: 'Look, monks are preoccupied with bodily cleanliness.' With these criticisms and condemnations they lose their souls on our account, and thus we become responsible and culpable for their perdition.

4. "Let us be assiduous in avoiding their tables. Let us seek, rather,

their reproach and not their praise; for their reproach brings us crowns, while their praise causes our ruination.

5. "What does it profit me to please men and anger the Lord my God? The Divine Apostle attests to this when he says: '[I]f I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ' (Galatians 1:10). Therefore, let us pray before the Lord, saying: 'O Jesus our God, deliver us from the praise and the reproach of worldly people, and let us not do anything to please them.' For neither can their praise lead us into the Kingdom of Heaven nor is their reproach so powerful as to exclude us from eternal life; on the contrary, it actually contributes to our inheritance of eternal life.

6. "Therefore, my beloved, knowing that we are bound to give account for every idle word (St. Matthew 12:36), let us flee from worldly conversations as one flees from a serpent."

7. Certain brothers visited Abba Anthony and said to him: "Tell us what we must do to be saved." The Elder replied to them: "Have you not heard what Scripture says about this? That is sufficient for you." "We wish to hear from you as well, Father," they said. The Elder replied to them: "The Gospel says: '[W]hosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also' (St. Matthew 5:39; *cf.* St. Luke 6:29)." "We cannot do this," they said. The Elder said to them: "If you cannot turn the other cheek, at least endure being smitten on the one." "We cannot do this either," they answered.**

8. The Elder summoned his disciple and said to him: "Make them a little porridge, for they are ill." To the visitors he said: "If you cannot do the one thing, and do not want to do the other, what can I do for you?"***

From Father Paul Evergetinos

9. Do you see how the Saint summarily and immediately dismissed those who asked him questions but who had no intention of carrying out his advice? He did not allow them to remain any longer with him, lest, in addition to not receiving any benefit from him, they should hinder his absolute concentration on God.

10. If, therefore, this most eminent of the Fathers and most dispassionate of the dispassionate safeguarded himself from idle talk, how much more does it behoove us to be attentive in this regard and to avoid those who visit us ostensibly for the purpose of conversing with us and learning about the salvation of their souls, but who have no intention of undergoing any toils in order to put God's commandment into practice or of carrying out any of the advice to which they appear to be listening so diligently, and remain unhealed after a first, or even a second, conversation. We should not readily afford them access to us, for in this way they may perhaps be embarrassed and either be brought to their senses or cured of their disease. They will come to a better understanding of themselves and will no longer bother us.

11. Moreover, we will be delivered not only from them, but also from the many others who, like them, insist on remaining incurably ill, having been influenced by the example set by the former. We will also be freed, not only from needless vexation, but from the not inconsiderable harm that our infirm nature suffers from conversation with men who do not care about their salvation.

* In thinking and teaching these things, Abba Makarios is in perfect harmony with the sound outlook and the correct teaching of the Orthodox Church concerning the monastic life, in contrast to the perilous and reprehensible extremes of certain heretics and schismatics, such as Evstathios and his circle. Practically all of the decisions of the local Synod of Gangra, which convened around 340 A.D., condemn such an aversion towards those living in the world, about whom Abba Makarios is speaking.

It is worth noting, therefore, that it is always *within the domain* of the Orthodox Church that a healthy ascetic ideal has been maintained.

** The following, additional exchange is found in the version of this anecdote printed in the *Patrologia Græca*: "The Elder said: 'If you cannot do even this, do not return evil for evil.' They replied: 'Neither can we do this'" (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 81B)—*Editors.*

*** At this point it is worth noting the implicit irony whereby the Saint seeks to make clear how superficial his interlocutors are.

Hypothesis XLV

Now, regarding those who visit places away from home, how they should behave, how they should walk, and how they should act when accompanying brothers.

A. From Abba Isaiah

1. If you go away and are offered hospitality in someone else's dwelling, and your host goes out of the house and leaves you on your own, do not lift up your eyes to examine what he has in his house. Do not open anything, be it a window, a pot, or a book, but say to him as he is on his way out: "Give me a small task to perform until you return"; and do without hesitation whatever he suggests to you.

2. If you hear people talking outside the house where you are staying, do not retain the words in your mind or go inside and tell your host about them, lest you harm both him and yourself.

3. If you are still young, do not ever wear good quality clothing, and never laugh so uncontrollably that you show your teeth. Let your face be inclined towards the ground out of modesty. When you are outside your cell, wear sandals; but when you are in your cell, accustom yourself not to wear sandals, unless, of course, you are ill. When you walk, let your hands remain close to your belt, and do not swing them to and fro, as worldly people do; also, do not look this way and that. Meditate in your mind, or pray to God in your heart.

4. If you are going to a city or a village, let your eyes look downwards, lest you arouse warfare for yourself when you are back in your cell. If, while you are travelling, a woman says, "Peace to you," reply to her silently in your heart, keeping your eyes lowered. If you can, pay no heed even to a woman's clothing.

5. If you are walking with brothers, keep a little distance from them, so that you may remain silent; if you are travelling with your seniors, do not go ahead of them at any time. If your companion is an Elder, and

you have luggage with you, do not let the Elder carry it. If you are both young, let each of you take turns in carrying it, and let the one who carries it go in front. Whatever place you visit, do not talk impudently, but be modest in all things.

6. When you are away from your cell, do not sleep in anyone's dwelling where your heart harbors fear of falling into sin. If you are going to eat in a particular place, and you find out that a woman is also due to eat there, do not sit down to eat under any circumstances. It is more profitable for you to distress the person who has invited you than secretly to commit adultery in your heart.* In whatever place you are going to sleep, do not share a bedcover with anyone else; offer up many prayers before you go to sleep.

7. If you are on a journey and there is a sick person among you, allow him to go ahead of you, so that, if he wishes to sit down, he may do so.

8. If you are travelling with a brother and you turn off the road in order to visit a friend to whom you need to speak about some matter, having said to your brother, "Sit down here and wait for me," and in the meantime your friend detains you by offering you something to eat, do not let any morsel enter your mouth until you have first invited your brother to eat with you, thus to be refreshed.

9. If you are travelling with more than one brother and you are embarrassed to take all of the brothers along with you to your friend, because there are so many of them, do not show disdain for them by leaving them behind and going off to eat in secret, but consult with them as to what should be done, listening with humility to whatever they tell you. When you are travelling with them, do not think only about yourself and do not shirk menial tasks.

10. If you go away with brothers whom you do not know, give them the honor of priority, even if they are younger than you. If you happen to visit a friend's house with them, allow them precedence in all things, whether it be the use of the wash basin or in starting to eat at the meal; and do not make out that it was on your account that they were shown hospitality, but give them the credit by saying: "It was because of you that this good man took pity on me."

11. If you are travelling with brothers and there is one of them for whom you have particular love of a Godly kind, do not be overly familiar with him while the others are watching, lest there be one among them who is spiritually sick and succumbs to jealousy. In this case, you will bear responsibility for his sin, since you afforded him the occasion of sin.

12. If you go to visit certain friends, do not expect that they will be especially happy to see you, so that, if they receive you simply, you may thank God for this.

13. If you go with your brothers to visit a poor brother, do not cause him distress over anything, but buy at your own expense whatever you are going to eat, and make sure that some of it will be left over for him; the shelter that you have found will suffice for you.

14. If you enter the cell of a monk whom you do not know, sit wherever he lets you sit, and do not enter another room until he invites you to do so.

15. If you are walking with other brothers along a road, be sensitive at every step of the way to the thoughts of anyone among you who is weak—asking whether he needs to sit down for a little while or to eat a little before the customary hour.

16. If you are away from your cell, wherever you may go, do not act brashly under any circumstance, so that people might benefit from your good example, and especially from your inward and outward silence. For familiarity and all of the other passions are engendered in the man of weak conscience, who, on account of the spiritual laziness of his heart, is unable to see his own sins.

17. If you live in silence in your cell and have made it a rule for yourself to eat at a particular hour, or not to eat cooked food, or any other such rule whatever, when you go away from your cell, be careful not to say to anyone while sitting at table, "Forgive me, but I cannot eat this," for if you do, all of your ascetic toil will pass in vain into the hands of your enemies. For your Master and Savior said: "Do this in secret, that thy Father might provide for thee openly."**

18. He who cherishes his ascetic labors safeguards them from vainglory, lest they be lost.

B. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Isidore once went to visit Abba Theophilos, the Archbishop of Alexandria. When he returned to Sketis, the brothers asked him how things were in the city. He replied: "In truth, brothers, I did not see the face of any man other than the Archbishop."

2. When they heard this, the brothers were perturbed, and they asked: "Did the earth perhaps open up and swallow everyone?" "Not at all," answered the Elder. "But I was not overcome by the thought of looking at anyone." On hearing this, they marvelled at the Elder's attentiveness and scrupulousness. Let us, therefore, also be assiduous in guarding our eyes from aimless wandering.

3. Once, when a Feast had been celebrated at the Cells, the brothers were eating in the Church *trapeza*. Among them was a certain brother who told the monk who was serving: "I do not eat cooked food. Bring me a little salt." The server called out to another brother in front of the assembled monks: "Such and such a brother does not eat cooked food; bring him some salt."

4. One of the Elders got up and said to the brother who had asked for salt: "It would have been better for you to eat meat in your cell today, than to have heard this said about you in front of everyone."

5. An ascetic brother*** who did not eat even bread visited a certain great Elder. Some other guests also happened to be there at the same time, and the Elder prepared a small quantity of cooked food for them. But when they sat down to eat, the ascetic brother set before himself only a few moistened chickpeas and ate these.

6. So, when they rose from the table, the Elder took the brother aside and said to him: "Brother, if you are visiting someone, do not make a display of your way of life. If you want to maintain your ascetical regimen, stay in your cell and never come out." Suitably chastened by the words of the Elder, thenceforth whenever the ascetic met with other brothers, he behaved just as they did.

7. An Elder said: "If you visit someone in another place, do not seek to advertise your way of life; that is, that you do not eat oil, or fish, or cooked food. Only when it comes to wine should you not relax your rule, if you fear carnal warfare. Even if certain people reproach you about this, do not let it concern you."

8. A brother asked an Elder: "If I am at an *agape* meal with other Fathers, what am I to do?" The Elder answered: "Rather than fasting, humbly apply yourself to unceasing prayer." The brother asked: "How can I eat and listen to other people talking *and* pray at the same time?" The Elder responded to him: "Compulsion enables us to accomplish everything. If you wish to be a true monk, always compel yourself; he who does not compel himself is not a true monk."

* "[W]hosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (St. Matthew 5:28).

** "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (St. Matthew 6:16-18).

*** Reading "*Ἀδελφὸς ἀσκητὴς*" rather than "*Ἀδελφὸς εἰς Σκῆτιν*" (see *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. II, p. 454 [chapter 8, §31])—*Trans.*

Hypothesis XLVI

That we must not turn away empty-handed anyone who approaches us for the purpose of obtaining alms, but must receive him kindly as one sent by God and share with him what we have; and that even if he is importunate, we must imitate God by forbearing with him and not getting angry. That God often recompenses many times over those who give alms. How and by whom alms should be distributed in cœnobitic monasteries.

A. From the Life of St. Gregory the Dialogist

1. The Blessed Gregory, who wrote the Lives of the Saints of Italy in the form of a dialogue, and who became Patriarch [Pope] of Rome, was, prior to becoming a Bishop, a monk at, and later Abbot of, the Monastery of St. Andrew, known as "Κλιοσκαίρη [Klioskaire]."*

2. One day, as the Saint was sitting in his cell and working on some calligraphy, a poor man approached him. As a true servant of Christ, Gregory summoned his cell-attendant and ordered him to give the pauper six *solidi*; the cell-attendant did as he was bidden.

3. Not even an hour elapsed before the same poor man came back to the Saint and said: "Have pity on me, O servant of the Most High God, for I have lost much and you have given me only a small amount." Gregory immediately summoned his cell-attendant and said to him: "Brother, go and get him another six *solidi*." The brother carried out the Saint's command. Taking the additional amount, the poor man then departed.

4. A little later on that same day, the pauper visited Gregory for a third time, saying: "Take pity on me, O servant of the Most High God, and give me more alms, for I have lost a great deal." Once again the Saint summoned his steward and said to him: "Brother, give this man another six *solidi*." "Believe me, Father," replied the brother, "we do not have even one *solidus* left in the treasury."

5. The Blessed Gregory said to him: "Do you not have any vessel or article of clothing to give him?" "Dear Father," answered the brother, "we have no other vessel than the silver dish on which our noble lady** sent us a few moistened pulses, as is her custom." The servant of God said to him: "Go, brother, and give him the dish." The steward did as the blessed man ordered him. Taking the silver dish, together with the twelve *solidi*, the poor man departed.

6. When Gregory became Patriarch, as is customary for Patriarchs, he ordered his *Sacellarius**** to invite twelve poor men to dine with him. The *Sacellarius* carried out this order. But when the guests were seated at the table, it appeared to the Patriarch that they were thirteen in number.

7. Gregory summoned the *Sacellarius* and asked him: "Did I not order you to invite twelve men? Why, contrary to my will, have you invited thirteen?" When the *Sacellarius* heard this, he became frightened and said: "Believe me, Reverend Master, they are but twelve." For no one else except the Patriarch saw the thirteenth.

8. While they dined, the Patriarch looked at the thirteenth man, who was sitting at the end of the table, and lo, his countenance assumed different forms: at one time he appeared gray-haired, at another time youthful. When they rose from the table, the blessed Gregory let all of the others go, but the thirteenth man, who appeared so remarkable to him, he grasped by the hand and took into his private quarters, saying to him: "I adjure you, by the great power of God, who are you? And what is your name?"

9. The man replied to him: "And why do you ask me my name? It, too, is remarkable. I am the poor man who visited you at the Monastery of St. Andrew. You gave me twelve *solidi* and a silver dish, on which the blessed Sylvia, your mother, sent you pulses.

10. "Know, therefore, that from that day, when you patiently provided for me, the Lord decreed that you should become a Primate of His Church, for which He shed His own blood, and be the successor of Peter, the Chief of the Apostles, since you emulated the virtue that he displayed when, in the simplicity of his heart, he distributed to the poor what was offered by the Christians of Jerusalem, according to the need

of each."****

11. The Blessed Gregory then asked him: "And how is it that you know that the Lord then decreed that I become Patriarch?" The man replied: "Because I am an Angel of the Lord Almighty, and this is why I know. For at that time the Lord sent me to you to test your intention, whether you gave alms out of love for mankind or for the sake of display."

12. When the blessed man heard this, he was filled with fear, for he had never seen an Angel thitherto, and up to then he had been looking at him and conversing with him as if he were an ordinary man. The Angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, for the Lord has sent me to remain with you as long as you are alive, and whatever you wish, ask it of the Lord through me."

13. When St. Gregory heard this, he fell on his face to the ground and worshipped the Lord, saying: "If the All-Merciful Lord has shown me such a multitude of mercies, for this small and insignificant intention of mine, as to send His Angel to be with me forever, then what glory shall they be vouchsafed who adhere to His commandments and perform acts of virtue? Truly does Scripture say that 'Mercy exalteth itself above judgment' (St. James 2:13) and that 'He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord' (Proverbs 19:17)."

B. From St. Gregory the Dialogist

1. Boniface, the man of God, who became a Bishop and was glorified by God with very many miracles, when still a boy, would leave his house and return, sometimes, without his shirt and, at times, without any clothing at all. For whenever, while walking about, he saw someone who lacked clothing, he would take off what he was wearing and put it on this person. He wanted this to be noticed only by the eyes of the Almighty, from Whom he hoped to receive his reward.

2. When he began to do this more and more frequently, his mother chided him, saying that it was not right for him to give his clothes away to the poor, when he himself was also indigent. On one occasion, she entered the granary and found that her son had distributed to the poor almost all of the wheat that she had gathered over the course of the year

for the needs of her household.

3. When she saw this, she began to lament and tear her hair at the thought of having lost an entire year's food supply. At that very moment, the child of God, Boniface, entered the granary and, finding his mother in such a state of distress, endeavored to calm her down with words of advice. But since she would not listen to his advice, he implored her to leave the granary, in which there was only a small amount of wheat left.

4. After she had departed, the young Boniface devoted himself to fervent prayer on that very spot. After a short time, he emerged and summoned his mother. When they went back into the granary, she saw it full of wheat, and even more than before. Moved to compunction at this sight, she begged her son to give away their wheat as he wished, since he was able so quickly to obtain from God what he requested.

C. From the Same Author

1. Once, when a very severe famine had befallen Campania, Benedict, Christ's faithful and wise steward, did not cease from compassionately distributing all of the food supplies of his monastery to those in need, to the point that nothing else was left in the cellar but a small quantity of olive oil in a glass vessel. A certain Subdeacon, by the name of Agapitus, went to the friend of God, beseeching him to give him a little oil.

2. The man of God, who was minded to distribute everything that belonged to him and disperse it throughout the world, ordered that the small quantity of oil to be given to Agapitus, who had requested it. The monk who was entrusted with the office of cellarer obeyed the Abbot's order, but only partially, for he did not give Agapitus all of the oil, but only a small amount of it.

3. A short time later, the Saint asked the cellarer whether he had given all of the oil to the man who had asked for it. The cellarer admitted that he had given Agapitus only part of the oil, adding, in order to excuse his disobedience, "If you order us to give all of that oil to the Subdeacon, there will be nothing left for the consolation of the brethren."

4. When Benedict, who was so meek, heard these words, he became angry and ordered the brothers to take the glass vessel containing the remaining oil and throw it out the window, lest any token of disobedience be left in the monastery. They did as the Saint commanded and threw out the vessel. An astonishing event then occurred. Beneath that window lay a heap of many large stones. When the glass vessel was thrown onto them, it remained intact, as if it had not been thrown at all, but had been deliberately placed there. Even though it had been thrown down from a height, neither was the vessel in the least bit broken, nor did the oil seep out of it.

5. When the venerable Father Benedict saw this miracle, he immediately ordered the brothers to take the vessel, just as it was, and give it to the Subdeacon. Next, he ordered that the brethren assemble together, and in front of them all he rebuked the disobedient monk for his lack of faith and for his disobedience. Then, along with the brethren, the blessed man gave himself to prayer. Now, in that same place in which he was praying, there was an empty jar covered with a lid.

6. While the Saint was praying, the lid on the jar began to loosen under pressure from the oil that was welling up inside it. When the lid had come off completely, the oil overflowed from the jar and covered the entire floor on which the Saint was at prayer.

7. When the venerable Abbot beheld this second miracle, he concluded his prayer and admonished the disobedient brother in a fatherly way, saying: "My son, strive to acquire unhesitating faith and a humility that befits your monastic profession." On hearing these words, the cellarer fell at the Saint's feet, begging forgiveness for his sin. Benedict gladly forgave him, and thereafter this monk was no longer overcome by the passion of faithlessness.

From Father Paul Evergetinos

8. St. Luke the Younger, too, when he was still a boy, did likewise. When he found his fellow men naked, he removed his own clothing and put it on them. He would return to his parents' house naked, for which they frequently reviled and beat him, even *leaving* him naked for a considerable time. Even so, this blessed youth did not desist from his admirable and compassionate endeavor.*****

D. From the Life of St. Evthymios

1. The great Father Evthymios and the brothers who were with him were sorely oppressed by a dearth of vital provisions, after they had settled in the new Lavra. It so happened that a throng of Armenians, no less than four hundred in number, while on their way from the Holy City to the Jordan, deviated from the road to the right, as if someone were guiding their steps, and arrived at the Lavra.

2. When the Saint saw these visitors, wishing to offer them relief from the toil of their journey, he summoned Dometios, whom he had appointed steward of the Lavra, and bade him prepare a meal for them. When Dometios responded by pointing out their own indigence and pleading that they did not have enough food for the daily needs of the brethren, the Saint, having confidence in God, Who poured forth an abundance of food for the widow in return for her generous disposition towards the Prophet Elias,• ordered Dometios to go to where the bread was stored. "For in this way," he said, "you will learn how feeble human thoughts are and what Divine Grace is capable of miraculously providing."

3. Dometios immediately yielded and went to the bread pantry, and—oh, Thine inexplicable wonders, O Christ!—found that the room, by God's wise Providence, was so full of bread that the door could barely be opened, even to a small extent, being obstructed from inside by the multitude of loaves. He called for some of the other brothers, and together with them he forced open the door. They then saw what was inside: an incalculable quantity of loaves and a great abundance of both wine and oil, commensurate with Evythmios' munificence.

4. When Dometios saw these marvels and perceived in them the operation of Divine Grace, he fell at the feet of the great Evthymios and asked forgiveness, offering fervent repentance, in return, for his niggardliness.

E. From the Life of St. Marcian

1. When the Consecration of the Church of the Holy Martyr Anastasia was being celebrated, the Emperor,•• the Patriarch,••• and practically the entire city went to attend the ceremony, as one might expect.

St. Marcian

While the service was in progress, a certain pauper approached St. Marcian, the Steward of the Great Church (who had built the Church of St. Anastasia from its foundations), wistfully extending his right hand and asking for something to stave off his hunger.

2. At that time, St. Marcian had nothing on his person to offer to the beggar; but his soul was inwardly filled with great kindness and love for his fellow men. Somehow, he managed to elude the crowd and looked around for a place that would afford him privacy. He happened to be wearing nothing other than a single tunic. Indeed, throughout his life he was in the habit of not using two garments.••••

3. Since he was in this state of lack, it would have been easy for the man of God to refuse the pauper's request by pleading his own poverty; furthermore, he had the all-seeing eyes of God as witnesses that he indeed possessed nothing. Nonetheless, fearing lest he grieve God by failing to give this man something, he took off the sole garment that he was wearing and eagerly gave it to the beggar. From that point on, he was clad only in his Priestly vesture, the *Phelonion* that covered his body,••••• which he gathered around him on all sides in his anxiety to avoid, as far as possible, drawing attention to himself, as well as to conceal what had happened from the eyes of all.†

4. When all of the clergy had entered the Sanctuary, the senior Priest invited Marcian to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. The Saint continued to gather and fold in his *Phelonion*, as we have said, endeavoring to conceal what he had done.

5. Whenever the Priests standing around Marcian, including the Patriarch, looked closely at him, they beheld an extraordinary and ineffable miracle, credible only to those who witnessed it: he was clad under his *Phelonion* in a luxurious royal robe, studded with brightly-gleaming gold, which became more apparent when the Saint raised his hands to impart the Divine Body to the faithful who approached to receive Holy Communion.

6. When they saw this, some kept the miracle to themselves, while others disclosed it to other people, the former marvelling thereat, the latter being filled with envy. These latter, believing it to be a material garment, went to Patriarch Gennadios, supposing him to be unaware

of what they very much wanted him to know, and reported the matter to him, simultaneously criticizing and slandering the Saint. The Patriarch replied that he himself had seen the marvel, but did not know how it had taken place and was entirely at a loss to comprehend it.

7. When the Liturgy was over, the Patriarch sent for Marcian. Meeting with him in private, he rebuked him for the robe which he supposed him to be wearing, stating that such garments were appropriate for kings, and not for Priests. Perplexed by these words, Marcian fell at the Patriarch's feet, shedding many tears, and completely denied the accusation. He insisted that the whole episode was an optical illusion and that even to entertain such a thought about him was sheer madness.

8. In response to this, the Patriarch—for he reckoned it foolish and patently absurd to distrust one's own eyes—grasped the *Phelonion* with his own hand and pulled it up along with the rest of the Saint's Priestly attire. Thereupon, *mirabile visu et dictu*, that golden robe, which had previously been visible, was nowhere to be seen; for the Saint was naked, just as he was without these sacerdotal vestments. Naked in appearance, he was nonetheless covered by the truly golden raiment of virtue, invisible to the physical eyes.

9. The Patriarch was astounded at this miracle, as were also the rulers, whom news of the event had already reached, and thereby God and His servant were magnified. For the Saint was very generous in endowing houses of worship, and had constructed many very large Churches and had repaired many others. However, he was even more diligent in caring for the poor. This is evident from many accounts, and especially from the story that we are about to relate. Thereby, not only will his compassion for the needy be made clear, but it will become clear what spiritual gifts those who cherish the Godly work of philanthropy are vouchsafed.

10. By night, this admirable man would go around the squares and alleys of the city, earnestly looking to see if he might find some corpse cast out on the street on account of dire poverty and bereft of anyone to take care of burying him. Wherever he saw such a person, he looked upon him gladly—as if he had made some great gain—diligently washed and clothed him, and made all of the other customary preparations for his interment.

11. He would then address the corpse as if it were alive, saying, "Come, brother, and let us embrace one another with love in Christ." With these words, he elicited obedience from the dead person. For the corpse would arise—oh, the ineffable miracle!—and embrace the good Marcian, showing thereby that Christ Himself had acknowledged the care shown by Marcian for the dead. The corpse then became a corpse once more, and this in full view of bystanders.

F. From the Life of St. Theodosios the Cœnobiarch

1. The great Theodosios excelled in showing compassion to the poor. He overcame their penury by his largesse, but he was never able to assist them as much as he desired, for his spirit was never stingy, but constantly bountiful, as the following narrative will demonstrate.

2. Although the Saint showed great compassion to all who were oppressed by poverty, all the more did he intensify his compassion towards those who were tormented by other hardships and who, in addition to poverty, were racked by disease or physical disability or, worst of all, by leprosy.

3. In this way he proved to be sight to the blind, mobility to the lame, clothing for the naked, shelter for the homeless, and a physician of the sick—their benefactor, caregiver, and servant. In short, he became "all things to all men" (I Corinthians 9:22) on account of his surpassing love for humanity. He washed off blood from the injured, cleansing their wounds, and kissed the very mouths of lepers, thereby very wisely consoling them and persuading them to endure their misfortune with meekness. Indeed, one would be speaking the truth if he were to characterize the great Theodosios as a haven of salvation for all, as a clinic for all, a warm home for all, and a treasury for the needs of all. For all received from him the loving care that they needed.

4. In the *cœnobion* of St. Theodosios one could not find anyone who would complain that he was neglected or ignored because he was poor and unimportant. On the contrary, the poorer and lowlier a man was, the greater the care that the Saint would provide for him, just as Christ, when He passed through this world, approached those who were least among men, regarding them as His own and bountifully ministering to their needs.††

5. No needy person who approached the great Theodosios was ever sent away empty-handed. No one was neglected or deemed unworthy of charitable aid. Those who assisted St. Theodosios in his work of serving others remembered how, on one day, more than a hundred tables were set for the down-and-out. Such was the human source of almsgiving which welled so lavishly for the destitute. The next part of this narrative will make clear what the Divine source of the miracles that resulted from the Saint's compassion was, which naturally far surpassed their human source.

6. God once chastised the earth, and He chastised it through famine. This famine was not brief in duration, and it affected everyone alike. While everyone was being scourged by this plague, suffering retribution for their sins, as the Prophet Micah says,††† the Feast of Palms [Palm Sunday—*Trans.*] arrived. On the day of this Feast, throngs of peasants and paupers descended on the place in which the *cœnobion* was located. It was customary for them to come to the *cœnobion* every year for this Feast, but even more so that particular year, because they were impelled by hunger and hoped to find something to eat there.

7. The monks whose task it was to prepare food panicked when they saw so many people; they attempted to distribute the food by weighing and measuring it, so that by virtue of such thriftiness and exactitude there might be enough for everyone. They established one liter as the standard portion for each individual.

8. St. Theodosios, who happened to be passing by just then, saw what the monks were doing and also saw the crowd trying to force open the gates of the *cœnobion*. Being of like mind with Job and predisposed to say, as he did, that "the stranger did not lodge without, and my door was opened to every one that came" (Job 31:32), he ordered them to open the gates of the *cœnobion* so that all who wanted could enter. He then commanded that the tables normally designated for use by male pilgrims be set up for all of these people, whose numbers it was difficult to calculate. He also commanded that they be abundantly laden, so that the visitors could satisfy their hunger.

9. All of the monks who were going to serve the pilgrims, on seeing such a great multitude, doubted whether the endeavor would succeed, and had no idea how to carry out the order that they had received. But

when they reflected on the virtue and Grace of him who had issued the command—the great Theodosios—they at once rejected their feeble thoughts and viewed the matter from the lofty standpoint of faith. They therefore immediately opened the gates and gratefully welcomed those who entered. Next, they worked hard to prepare the tables, cheerfully offering the visitors whatever was available in the *cœnobion*.

10. This was the good and philanthropic intention of the great Theodosios and his monks, which was displayed so eagerly and unmurmuringly. Now, what did God, Who works wonders, do to reward this good and generous intention? By His blessing and His Grace, He deigned that these many people should be satisfied with only a few victuals, just as when Jesus satisfied the five thousand in the wilderness with five loaves.†††† The miracle was not only that these hungry people ate their fill, but also that the bread pantries were found to be replete with bread. The monks who attended to the poor thought that there were no more loaves; yet the pantries proved to contain more than they had before. The power of the prayer of the great Theodosios was such that both the pantries and the bellies of the poor were filled.

11. In this miraculous way, God rewarded the monks' good intention and kindness to the poor. He sent not only the unstinting rain of His blessing from on high, rewarding the bounteous kindness of the great Theodosios, but also, through this miracle, made Theodosios exceedingly famous throughout the region. Besides, does not God Himself promise that He will glorify those who know how to glorify Him?†††††

12. On another occasion there was a Feast Day and, in fact, a Feast of the Virgin Mother of God. By reason of this important Feast, so many people came to the *cœnobion* that the serving monks had no time to look after them or prepare sleeping-quarters for them. And they certainly did not have enough food to satisfy everyone. All they could provide was a single loaf of bread at each table for the many individuals.

13. And yet the Lord, Whose right hand unstintingly provides for all needs and which He opens to feed all of His creatures,‡ and Who had earlier filled the storerooms of the *cœnobion*—this same Lord then filled the tables or, better to say, the bellies of those people with good things, so that that immeasurable crowd was satisfied. And so many baskets were filled with the leftover food that the pilgrims took large quantities

back to their homes, while the serving monks thereafter continued to provide meals for visitors from the contents of these baskets.

14. And who, on seeing even Egyptians flocking to the monastery of the great Theodosios at the time of its Consecration, would not have supposed that the wells would run out of water, providing such a multitude merely something to drink? And yet, this crowd ate its fill and there remained food for those who would come later, so that a rich table could be provided for them, too.

15. Who among those who see these miracles occurring in the desert, down to the present day, does not have strong proof that He Who rained food on the Hebrews in the desert through the prayer of Moses now feeds such great multitudes through the supplications of Theodosios? Whoever entrusts the care of his life to Christ will be able to accomplish this great and remarkable work and will succeed in providing food in abundance for many people. Indeed, you will see many hastening to the desert because they truly believe that the great Theodosios is that very lad for whose sake the Savior of old blessed five loaves (St. John 6:9) and filled so many thousands of men to satiety.

G. From the Life of St. John the Merciful

1. Some of those responsible for distributing charitable assistance to the poor once went to see the Blessed John. Among other things, they reported to the holy man that, in the places where aid was distributed, several young girls had gathered who did not seem to be poor, since they were wearing fine garments and necklaces, and they asked him whether they should offer alms to them as well. When the most meek and gentle Bishop heard them, he looked at them sternly, as if to reproach them, and said to them: "If you wish to be servants of the humble John, or rather, of Jesus, and to be dispensers of alms, then you should obey the commandment that says: 'Give to him that asketh thee' (St. Matthew 5:42).

2. "If, again, you say that you are servants of another, who bids you examine and scrutinize the life of the poor who beg for help, then you should know that neither Christ nor the humble John has need of such meddlesome servants. If what is offered as alms were ours, one could forgive your thriftiness in administering these funds; but since they are

all provided by God Himself, it is imperative that we keep His commandment when distributing His goods.

3. "If, on the other hand, you were apprehensive, owing to lack of faith, lest the amount expended in charitable aid should exceed the income of the Church, I absolutely refuse to share your lack of faith. I am convinced that even if everyone in the world who is in need of charity were to assemble in Alexandria, they would not exhaust the treasuries of God in the least." With these prudent counsels, he healed them of their faithlessness and sent them off to perform their duty. To those present, who were astounded by his munificent spirit, he related the following story:

4. "When I was fifteen years old, I was living in Cyprus. One night I had an astonishing dream. There appeared before me an exceedingly comely and chaste maiden. She was dressed in splendid raiment and she had a wreath of olive-branches on her head. This maiden approached me and nudged me on my side with her hand. I was frightened and woke up, and at once it became obvious to me that I was looking at this young woman, not in a dream, but in reality. I then asked her where she had come from and how she dared to approach me while I was sleeping.

5. "Looking at me with a cheerful and tranquil expression, the maiden replied to my questions: 'I am the first of the daughters of the Great King. If, therefore, you make me your friend, I can make you His friend. No one else has greater boldness before Him than I do, for I alone could persuade Him to descend from Heaven to earth and to assume human flesh.' With these words she immediately vanished from my sight. Then I came to myself and pondered the meaning of what I had seen, turning it over in my mind, and I concluded that this young woman was none other than Charity (Love). For it was on her account that God did not disdain to come down to earth and be seen by men as one like them.

6. "I immediately got up and walked to Church, because day was already dawning. On the way, I met a poor man who was naked and frozen from the severe cold. I at once took off the cloak that I was wearing and gave it to him, saying to myself: 'Now I shall ascertain whether what I saw was real or illusory.'

7. "Before I reached the Church, I was approached by a man clad all in white, who offered me a bag containing one hundred gold *solidi*, saying: 'Take these, my friend.' Although I gladly received them, nonetheless I at once regretted accepting them. I turned round, intending to give them back to the donor, since I had no need of them. In the meantime, this white-clad man had disappeared. I then realized that what I had seen was not an illusion, but manifest reality.

8. "From then on, whenever I offered anything to a needy person, I would say to myself: 'Now I will see whether Christ returns it to me a hundredfold, according to His promise: "[He] shall receive an hundredfold" (St. Matthew 19:29).' Since I confirmed this truth countless times by my very deeds, I said to myself: 'Stop. How long will you tempt Him Who cannot be tempted?' I feel sorry for these faint-hearted men who came here today to lead me astray by making me a party to their lack of faith and to inveigle me into mercilessness, when I have so many clear proofs of the value of almsgiving."

9. A certain foreigner, on hearing about the Saint's great kindness, conceived the idea of tempting him who was above all temptation. So he dressed in rags and approached the Saint as he was on his way to the hospital (for the Saint was accustomed to visiting the sick two or three times a week), calling out to him in a plaintive voice: "Master, have pity on me, for I am a prisoner of war." The Saint ordered his bursar to give the beggar six *solidi*. As soon as he had received the money, the would-be beggar ran off, changed his clothing, and approached the Patriarch via another road, likewise begging for money. Again the Saint commanded that he be given alms.

10. In the meantime, the bursar drew near to the great man and whispered in his ear that this beggar was the same person who had received six *solidi* a short while before. But the Saint paid no heed to this information. When the would-be beggar reappeared for a third time in a different guise and asked for help, the disciple nudged the Saint, so as to make him aware that this was the same person and thus to refuse him alms. The Patriarch then uttered that celebrated response: "Give him twelve *solidi*, for perhaps it is my Lord Who is testing me."

11. One time, while the Holy Patriarch was on his way to Church, he was approached by a nobleman whom thieves had despoiled of all his

goods and who had, thereby, been reduced to abject poverty. The Saint ordered that fifteen pounds of gold be given without further ado to this impoverished nobleman. But the man who received the order, whether because he was moved by disobedience, or because he was egged on by other clergy in the Patriarchate, did not give him the entire amount, on account of the fact that there was not much in the treasury (since the Patriarch was not wont to amass money). Thus, he gave the nobleman only five pounds of gold, instead of the fifteen that he had been ordered to give him.

12. When the blessed Patriarch emerged from the Church, a very rich widow handed him a promissory note for five hundred pounds of gold as a gift to the Church. St. John took the note and read it. Through the Grace that dwelt within him, he understood that his order regarding the payment of the entire sum to the impoverished nobleman had not been carried out. He immediately summoned those to whom he had given the order and asked them whether they had in fact given that man fifteen pounds of gold.

13. They falsely maintained that they had given him the fifteen pounds. The Saint then sent for the very man that had asked him for help and found out from him that they had given him only five pounds. The Saint then said to those who assisted him in his charitable works: "The Lord will demand from you on the Day of Judgment the remaining thousand pounds of gold which this lady had intended to donate to us." After saying this, he showed them the note regarding the gift, on which only the amount of five hundred pounds was inscribed. "If you had given to the man in need," the Patriarch went on, "the amount of fifteen pounds that I specified to you from the outset, this lady would have offered to God fifteen hundred pounds. In order that you might have concrete proof of your want of faith, summon this God-pleasing lady."

14. Within a short time, the lady arrived, bearing the amount of gold that she had promised in writing. After receiving her gift, St. John thanked her for it and asked her in the presence of his disobedient assistants: "Pray tell me, had you determined from the outset to donate this amount of gold?" The astonished lady realized that the Saint, with his gift of clairvoyance, had come to know what she herself had done in private. Gripped with fear, she confessed the whole matter, saying the

following, among other things: "Truly, Master, on the note that I gave you I had originally written, by my hand, fifteen hundred pounds of gold. A few days ago, while I was preparing to visit you in order to give you the promissory note concerning my donation, I unrolled it to look at it. I then discovered that the thousand pounds had been erased—I know not how—completely spontaneously. At this point, I deemed that it was not God's Will that I donate to you more than five hundred pounds."

15. When the assistants of the Patriarch heard these words, they were terrified and, falling at the Saint's feet, begged forgiveness for the sin of disobedience. On that Christ-loving woman who donated the gold, the Saint invoked God's blessing, and she departed in peace.

16. St. John was accustomed to studying the Lives of Saints who were conspicuous for their almsgiving, because he wished to follow in their footsteps. Among others, he read the Life of St. Serapion the Sindonite.‡‡ Thenceforth, he did not cease to marvel at this holy man and to relate the following incident from his life:

On one occasion, St. Serapion came across a destitute man and felt so sorry for him that he took off his overcoat and gave it to him. When he had gone a little further, he met another man, who was shivering from the cold. He took off his shirt and put it on him. He was then left naked, holding in his hands the Holy Gospel Book.

17. When one of his acquaintances saw him in this state, he asked him: "Who made you naked?" "This," replied Serapion, indicating the Gospel Book. But he sold even this Gospel, giving the money that he collected for it to the poor. His disciple once asked him: "Father, where is the small Gospel Book that you used to have?" "Believe me, my son," he answered, "in obedience to Him Who said, '[G]o and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor' (St. Matthew 19:21), I resolved not to spare even the book in which this commandment is written, but to sell it for the poor."

H. From the Life of St. Alypios

The virtue of almsgiving so flourished in the soul of the great Alypios that, when he gave alms to someone, he felt greater joy than the one who received them. On one occasion, a poor man asked him for

clothing. Without even the least hesitation, Alypios took off the tunic that he was wearing and dropped it from his column. The poor man took it and went away, thanking God for this act of providence. Alypios endured being frozen from the cold, until one of his disciples, who lived in sheltered accommodation (a cell), seeing the state the Elder was in, gave him another garment with which to cover himself.

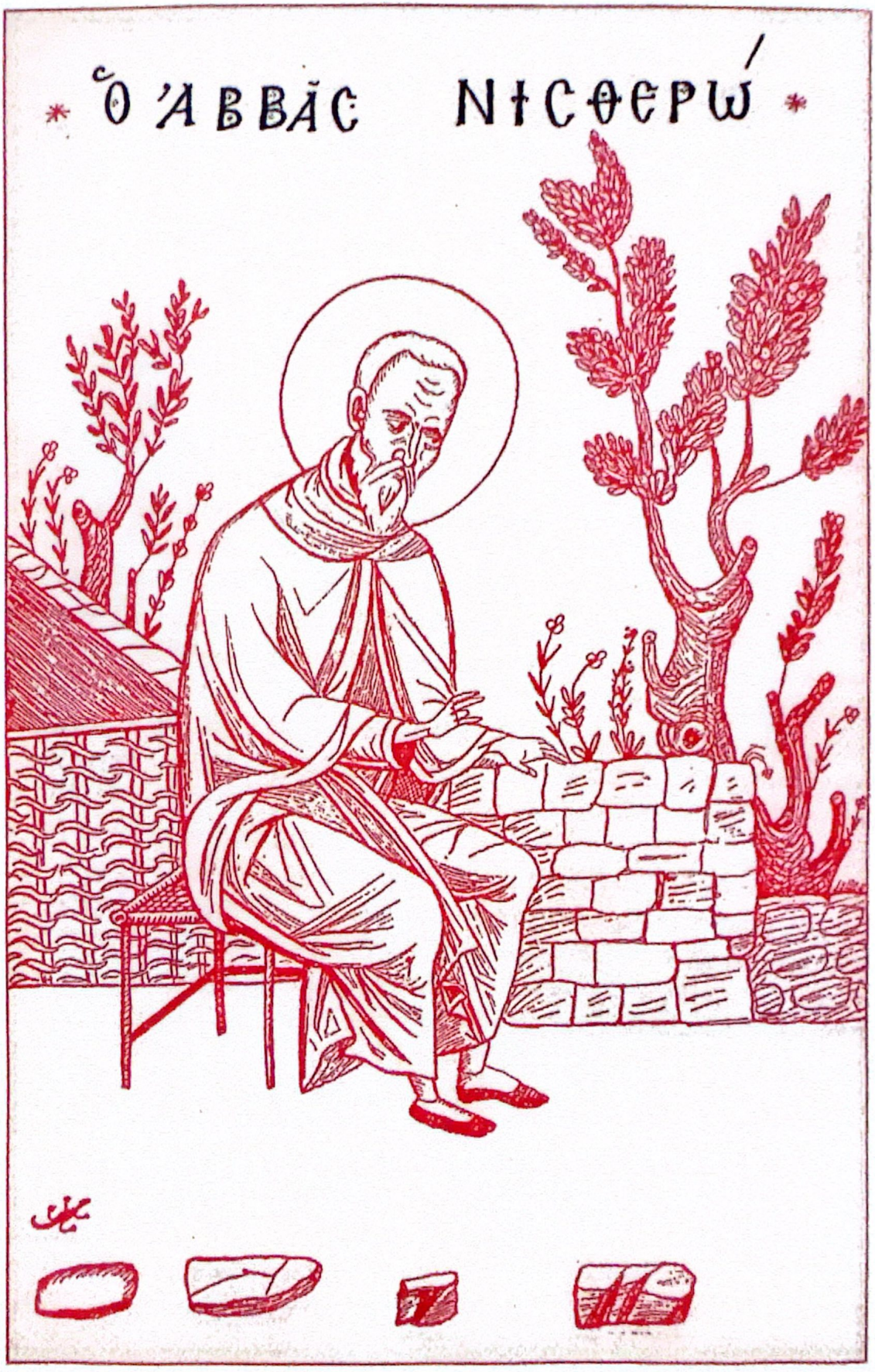
I. From the *Gerontikon*

1. A brother saw Abba Nisthero wearing two tunics and said to him: "If a poor man came and asked for clothing, which of the two tunics would you give him?" The Elder answered: "The better of the two." The brother then said: "If another poor man asked you for something, what would you do?" "I would give him the other one and then immediately go and sit somewhere, until God should send me something with which to cover myself; for I seek nothing from anyone else."

2. An Elder dwelled with a brother, following a cœnobitic rule. The Elder was merciful, and when a famine broke out people began to come to his door to receive alms. The Elder gave to all who came. When the brother saw what was going on, he said to the Elder: "Give me a portion of the loaves; and as for yourself, do as you wish with your own portion."

3. So the Elder divided up the loaves and continued to give alms from his portion. Even more people had recourse to the Elder when they heard that he gave to all comers. On seeing his good intention, God blessed the loaves, so that the more the Elder gave to the poor, the more the loaves multiplied. The brother, who had consumed all of his loaves, returned to the Elder and said: "Since I have a only a few small loaves left, Abba, let us resume our common life." " I will do as you wish," the Elder replied to him. Thus, they began to dwell together once more.

4. Again many people came to the Elder, and no one was turned away empty-handed. One day, the brother entered the pantry and noticed that no bread was left. It so happened that a poor man came asking for help, and the Elder told the brother to give him alms. "Father, there is nothing left," replied the brother. The Elder said: "Go and look carefully." The brother, therefore, went into the pantry and found it filled with loaves. On seeing this miracle, he became frightened and,



Abba Nisthero

taking some bread, gave it to the poor man. Marvelling at the faith and virtue of his Elder, he glorified God.

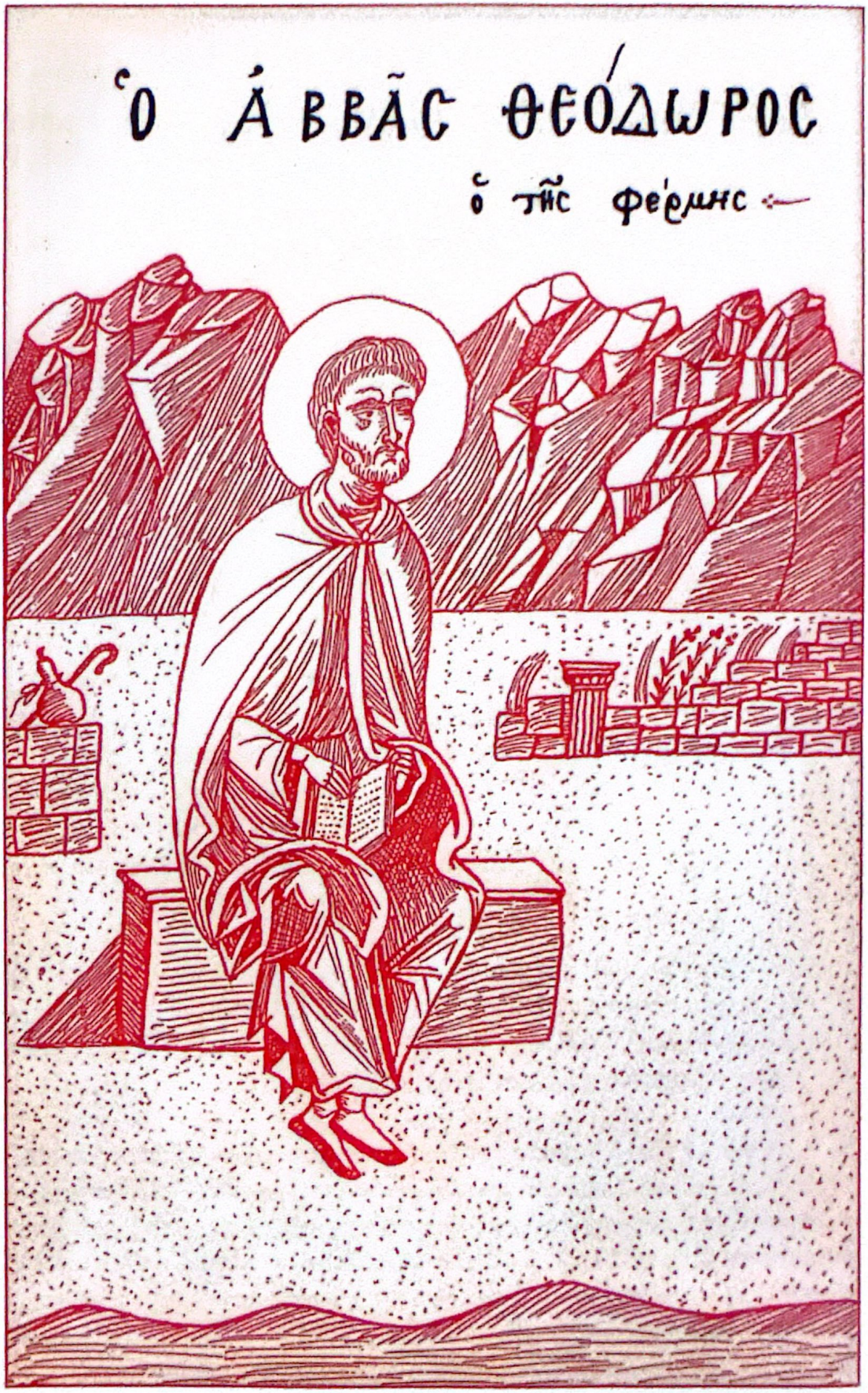
5. A certain Manichæan was walking in the desert in order to visit one of his fellow sectarians. When evening fell, not having anywhere to stay, he was at a loss as to what to do. There was an Orthodox hermit dwelling in that locality. He was aware of the Manichæan, having previously seen him on another occasion and having learned what heresy he professed.

6. Although he was afraid to approach the hermit, reckoning that he would not receive him on account of their difference of faith, nonetheless, not having anywhere else to go and compelled by force of his circumstances, the Manichæan went up to the hermit's cell and knocked on his door. The Elder opened the door and, when he saw the Manichæan and recognized him, welcomed him joyfully. He obliged him to eat and rest, and put him to bed.

7. Reflecting on the compassion shown him by the Elder, the Manichæan said to himself: "How is it that this man did not discriminate against me on religious grounds, even though he knows who I am, but looked after me so attentively? Truly, he is a man of God." When he got up in the morning, he went and fell at the feet of the Elder, saying, "As of this day I am Orthodox," and he stayed with him until the end of his days.

8. Abba Theodore of Pherme once asked Abba Pambo: "Give me a word." With great reluctance (for he did not like playing the teacher to others), Abba Pambo replied to him: "Theodore, go and show mercy to all; for mercy affords us boldness before God."

9. A monk of the Thebaid had been endowed by God with the gift of serving others, so as to offer each person who came to him whatever he needed. Once, when he was dispensing alms in a certain village, a woman dressed in old clothes came up to him, asking for charity. Noticing that she was wearing old clothes, he put his hand into the sack that he was carrying in order to give her a large amount of aid. But contrary to his intention, his hand became tense and he grabbed only a small amount, which he offered to her. Then another woman, who was well dressed, approached him. When he saw what she was wearing, he put



Abba Theodore of Pherme

his hand into the sack to give her a small amount, but curiously enough his hand relaxed its grip, opened out, and he gave her a large amount.

10. Reckoning that these involuntary movements of his hand were due to the judgment of God, the monk enquired about both of the women. He found out that the well-dressed one came from an eminent family but had fallen on hard times and wore good clothing out of self-respect, whereas the other wore old clothing in order to receive more aid.

J. From Abba Isaiah

If you do good to a poor man, do not ask him to assist you in your work, lest you forfeit the good deed that you performed for him.

K. From Abba Barsanouphios

1. A brother asked an Elder: "Father, when someone asks me for some item, how can I give it to him cheerfully when I doubt whether he really needs it? For in such a case I give it to him with a sense of compulsion and I feel a harshness in my soul." The Elder replied to him: "If you discover that he *does* need the item in question, give it to him joyfully, as if it were a gift from God; this is cheerfulness. But if you find out that he does not need it, do not give it to him, but say: 'I have a commandment from the Abba not to give anything to anyone who does not need it.' This does not constitute hardheartedness."

2. The brother asked again: "If I ever give someone something that he needs and I see that I am bothered by stinginess, to the extent that I feel unable to give him anything more, what am I to do? Should I give him more than he needs, to compensate for my stinginess, or should I simply strive not to give him less than he needs? If, however, thoughts of vainglory prompt me to give him a little more—or if, out of my shame, I want to appear generous to others—should I give him a very small amount, that is, less than he needs, in order to overcome these passions, or exactly what he needs, so as to carry out the commandment?"

3. The Elder replied: "If you are bothered by stinginess when it comes to giving your neighbor what he needs, do what you are able to

do. If you have a large amount of something, give him a little more of it; if you have a little of it, give him exactly what he needs. And if you are vexed by thoughts of vainglory or pleasing men when giving to someone else, do not provide him with more or less than what he needs, but exactly what he needs."

* This Greek word is apparently a corruption of the name "Clivus Scauri" ("on the Scaurus incline"), the street on the Caelian Hill on which the Monastery of St. Andrew was located—*Trans.*

** St. Sylvia, St. Gregory's mother, who is commemorated on November 4—*Trans.*

*** *Sacellarius* was the title of one of the assistant clergy to the Patriarch, who was second in rank after the Steward and charged with the oversight of monasteries and with certain other duties.

**** An allusion to the practice of the Church described by St. Luke the Evangelist in the Acts of the Apostles, where, among other things, he says the following: "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (Acts 4:34-35).

***** See the *Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, Vol. II, p. 191.

• "And the woman went and did so, and did eat, she, and he, and her children; and the pitcher of meal failed not, and the cruse of oil was not diminished, according to the word of the Lord which He spake by the hand of Elias" (III Kings 17:15-16).

•• Leo I (reigned 457-474)—*Editors.*

••• Gennadios I (reigned 458-471)—*Editors.*

•••• I have restored the word "not"—which is missing from the printed text of the *Εὐεργετινός*—from the *Patrologia Græca* (Vol. CXIV, col. 437A)—*Trans.*

••••• "In antiquity the *phelonion* reached almost to the floor, in front and back; therefore, it would have been impossible to tell what was being worn beneath it, unless the wearer lifted it" (St. Dimitry of Rostov, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints, Volume V: January*, trans. Father Thomas Maretta [House Springs, MO: Chrysostom Press, 2002], p. 159)—*Trans.*

† We have restored the words "which he gathered around him on all sides" and "to conceal what had happened from the eyes of all"— which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from the *Patrologia Græca* (Vol. CXIV, col. 437B)—*Editors.*

†† "And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him. And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at table in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples: for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto His disciples, How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, He saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (St. Mark 2:14-17).

††† "And the land shall be utterly desolate together with them that inhabit it, because of the fruit of their doings" (Micah 7:13).

†††† St. Matthew 14:13-21; St. Mark 6:31-44; St. Luke 9:10-17; St. John 6:1-13.

†††‡‡ "[F]or those that glorify Me will I glorify" (I Kings 2:30).

‡ "When Thou openest Thine hand, all things shall be filled with goodness" (Psalm 103:28); "Thou openest Thine hand, and fillest every living thing with Thy favor" (Psalm 144:16).

‡‡ Regarding St. Serapion, see Hypothesis XXXVI, Section A, above.

Hypothesis XLVII

That a monastic should not possess money on the pretext of almsgiving or accept offerings for this purpose; and what sort of almsgiving befits a monastic.

A. From the Life of St. Synkletike

1. The blessed Synkletike said: "An ascetic should not strive to acquire the wherewithal for almsgiving. Corporal works of mercy (feeding the hungry, providing drink for those who thirst, or clothing the naked) are decreed for lay people; furthermore, almsgiving is prescribed not so much for the sake of feeding the poor as for teaching men love and mutual concern.

2. "For God, Who directs the rich man, can also feed the poor man. Just as bodily circumcision among the Jews pointed symbolically to the removal of the sin that veils the heart,* so also almsgiving was prescribed for the purpose of instilling in men love for one another. For those, therefore, to whom love has been granted by Divine Grace, almsgiving is superfluous.

3. "I am not saying this in order to disparage almsgiving, but to demonstrate the purity and loftiness of non-acquisitiveness. Indeed, let not what is inferior be an impediment to what is superior. You have achieved a small victory with little effort, for you have given away all that is dear to your soul, with one goal in mind; henceforth, direct your gaze to what is greater, namely, to love.

4. "For you are a Cross-bearer for the love of Christ;** you ought, therefore, to utter always that expression of all who are free from, and unattached to, all things: 'Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee' (St. Matthew 19:27). You should, with regard to the goal to which you have committed yourself, repeat the bold words of the Apostles and say: 'Silver and gold have I none' (Acts 3:6).

5. "Even those living in the world should not make rash and indis-

criminate displays of almsgiving, but should emulate Abraham and show love for their fellow men through the general disposition of their souls. For that righteous man, when offering hospitality, in addition to the meal that he set out, also showed what manner of man he was. He stood there serving his guests and bade his wife do likewise, even though he had so many servants (*cf.* Genesis 18:1-8). Truly, those who give charity as did Abraham will have a reward for their almsgiving, even though they belong to the second rank.

6. "For the Lord, Who created the world, appointed two ranks for those dwelling therein: to those who live modestly He ordained matrimony for the sake of procreation, while on others, the monastics, He bestowed chastity, so that they might live a life of purity, rendering them equal to the Angels. To the former He entrusted laws and teachings concerning vengeance, while to the latter He says: 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay' (Romans 12:19). To the former rank, comprised of those in the world, He says: 'Work the earth' (Genesis 3:23); to us monastics He says: 'Take no thought for the morrow' (St. Matthew 6:34).

7. "And just as masters in the world assign servants to a variety of tasks, sending some to the fields to work the land and maintain the continuity of the human race by allowing them to produce offspring (and taking into their houses for domestic service those of that progeny whom they see to be well-mannered and comely), so also the Lord has placed in the field of the world those who choose honorable wedlock, while He appoints to His service those who are superior to the former, who choose to embrace a loftier calling (that of monasticism), since they cherish purity of body and soul.

8. "These latter are strangers to all earthly things, for they are vouchsafed to eat at the Master's table. They have no concern for clothing or any other material items, for they are clad in Christ and have Him as the Provider of all their needs. And their monastic profession consists in nothing other than the renunciation of the world and meditation on death.

9. "Therefore, just as the dead no longer make any movement with their bodies, so also should it be with us. Whatever we had to do for our bodies, we did when we were spiritual infants. Now that, as the Apostle says, we have crucified the world to ourselves and ourselves

to the world,*** let us live for the sake of our souls. Let us in this way show forth the virtues and let us offer *spiritual alms.* For blessed are those who are merciful in soul.****

10. "Just as Scripture says elsewhere that he who lusts after the beauty of someone, even if he does not act on his desire, has committed the sin, albeit unwitnessed by anyone,***** so also in this instance: almsgiving in spirit is valid when the will performs the act, even if, for want of material resources, alms were not actually given."

B. From the Life of St. Arsenios

1. After Arsenios the Great had abandoned life in the world, he went to live in asceticism with the monks in Sketis. When Arcadios, whose tutor he had been, succeeded to the imperial throne, following the death of his father Theodosios, he sent a tactful and humble letter of salutation to Arsenios. In it, he besought the Saint to aid him, by his prayers, to wield the authority that he had assumed, so that he might govern the empire in a manner pleasing to God.

2. As a token of his esteem, the Emperor offered Arsenios a valuable gift; to wit, all of the revenues from the taxes collected in Egypt. This afforded him a splendid opportunity for distributing money to the poor and to Churches and monasteries that were in need of assistance. Thus did Arcadios write, earnestly seeking to receive a response from Arsenios.

3. When Arsenios received this letter, he refused to write back to the Emperor, but instead sent him the following response by word of mouth: "It is not fitting for me to involve myself in distributing monies, since I have already died to the world; and a dead man performs no activity at all."

4. The same Arsenios the Great told some monks who were assembled together: "Let us not forget, brethren, that our enemy, the Devil, using many and various snares and ruses, endeavors to deceive us and contrives to make us fall into evil deeds on the pretext of doing what is good. For example, he puts into our minds the thought of showing hospitality and kindness to brothers who are visiting us, and consequently leads us into eating and drinking with them. The cause of such behav-

ior is the [presumed—*Trans.*] virtue of love!

5. "In like manner, without our suspecting it, he steals subtly into us and entices us into becoming slaves to the belly, thenceforth polluting us to satiety with passions and pleasures. To yet others, he suggests the thought of almsgiving and performing benefactions for the poor, thereby implanting in them the love of money and driving them into a frenzy of avarice."

C. From the Narrative of the Travels of St. John the Theologian

1. On the island of Patmos, to which the Apostle John had been exiled, there lived a man by the name of Myron, who was the ruler of the island. John healed his son, Apollonides, who was possessed with the demon of sortilege, and performed many other benefactions for Myron and his household. They all accepted the Christian Faith and John baptized them.

2. In gratitude, Myron offered John a large amount of money, and said to him: "Take this money, O Teacher, and distribute it to the poor." John replied: "I accept your intention, which I realize shows regard for God, but not the money itself, since it is to God that you are offering the money. Indeed, I think it preferable that you, and not I, distribute this money to those in need with your own hands."

3. Myron therefore doled out the money to the indigent, and the Lord multiplied the goods of his house. His entire family rejoiced in this act of charity.

D. From Abba Mark

1. Brother, Scripture says: "Atone for thy sins by alms, and thine iniquities by compassion on the poor" (Daniel 4:24).• You will say to me: "I have no money, since I renounced such once and for all when I became a monk; how am I to show compassion on the poor?"

2. My response to you is this: "You do not have any money? But you do have desires. Renounce these, and by this act of renunciation do what is good. If you do not have the ability to give material alms to the poor, do good for them through your good disposition towards them.

3. "When your brother sins against you, forgive him, in accordance with the word of the Lord.•• This will be for you a great act of almsgiving. If we seek forgiveness of our sins from God, we should forgive each person who sins against us, no matter what the sin may be, so that the words, 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven' (St. Luke 6:37), might prove true.

4. "It is a great thing for one who has money to distribute it to the poor; but to have mercy on one's neighbor for his sins counts so much more towards forgiveness, as the soul is by nature more precious than the body.

5. "All of us who have asked forgiveness of God and received it, and yet do not deign to provide the same to our neighbor, are like that wicked servant who received from his lord remission of a thousand talents, but refused to grant the request of his fellow servant to be forgiven a debt of one hundred *denarii*. The lord rightly told this wicked servant: 'O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?' (St. Matthew 18:32-33).

6. "'And [his lord] was wroth,' Christ says, 'and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him' (St. Matthew 18:34); and He adds, 'So likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother [his] trespasses' (St. Matthew 18:35). Hence, elsewhere He deprecates those who, enriched by various benefactions from Him, nonetheless behave ruthlessly and unsympathetically towards their fellow men, saying: 'But woe unto you that are rich! For ye have received your consolation' (St. Luke 6:24)."

7. One can, therefore, be rich even without money, by surpassing others in verbal skills, knowledge, various sorts of compassion for his fellow men, or in any of the gifts bestowed upon all men in general. One receives gifts in order to impart them to him who does not possess them. However, if one shows no pity towards his neighbor, he earns the reproach of the Lord: "Woe unto him! For he hath received his consolation."•••

E. From St. Diadochos

1. It is exceedingly•••• appropriate and in every way beneficial, once we have come to know the path of truth, immediately to sell all of our possessions and to distribute the proceeds from these to the poor, in accordance with the Lord's commandment.••••• Anyone who wishes to apply himself to the other commands of the Lord must practice this salutary command with great sedulousness.

2. From this we will gain a blessed freedom from anxiety about material things and, thereafter, gain poverty, which renders us invulnerable, elevating our minds above every thought of justice and injustice in matters financial, since we no longer have the material things that kindle the fire of greed.

3. Humility will then comfort us more than the other virtues and will give us rest—naked of all conceit—in its own embrace, as a mother takes her child and warms it in her own arms when, in its infantile simplicity, it has removed its clothes and flung them aside, delighting more in nakedness, on account of its great innocence, than in fancy clothing.

4. For "The Lord preserveth the simple," says Scripture; "I was brought low, and He saved me" (Psalm 114:6). The Lord assuredly demands of us an account of our almsgiving, in accordance to what we have, and not according with what we do not have (*cf.* II Corinthians 8:12).

5. If, therefore, out of fear of God, I beneficially distribute in a short period of time what I could have given over many years, on what grounds can I, who have nothing, be accused? Yet someone may say: "The poor, who were accustomed to being provided for regularly out of our means, from where will they find alms?" Let such a person learn not to reproach God on the pretext of his own love of money. For God will not fail to provide for His own creation, as He has done from the beginning. The needy were not deprived of sustenance or raiment before this or that person was prompted to almsgiving.

6. It is good, therefore, having come to a knowledge of this truth, to reject, in a spirit of noble service, the irrational vainglory engendered by wealth. We must hate our own desires, which is the same as hating our own life (St. Luke 14:26; *cf.* St. Mark 8:35). In this way, no longer rejoicing in the fact that we distribute money to the poor, we will severely

humble our mind with the thought that we are not in a position to do anything good.

7. As long as we are well-off financially, we rejoice greatly in distributing our money, if in fact goodness is active in us, on the ground that we are cheerfully serving the Divine commandment. But when we have exhausted all of our resources, boundless sorrow and abasement enter us, because we reckon that we are not doing anything worthy of righteousness. Henceforth, the soul returns to itself in great abasement, in order that what it cannot acquire daily through almsgiving it might procure for itself through laborious prayer, patience, and humility.

8. For "the poor and the needy shall praise Thy name" (*cf.* Psalm 73:21), Scripture says. For God does not bestow the charism of theology on anyone if he has not prepared himself to give up all his possessions for the sake of the glory of the Gospel of God, in order that by virtue of the poverty that is dear to God he might proclaim the glad tidings of the wealth of the Kingdom of God.† For he who said, "Thou, O God, hast prepared of Thy goodness for the poor," adding, "The Lord shall give the word to them that preach good tidings with great power" (Psalm 67:11-12), clearly means this.

F. From Abba Cassian

1. There are some monastics who misinterpret the beautiful Scriptural maxim that "[i]t is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), wresting the meaning of this saying in order to justify their own self-deception and their avaricious desires, and judge that it is more blessed to have control over their own will, by holding onto their wealth and giving from the abundance thereof to those in need, than to practice non-acquisitiveness, thereby contemning the teaching of the Lord in which He says: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come and follow Me" (St. Matthew 19:21). Let such people know that they have not yet renounced the world or attained to monastic perfection, since they are ashamed to take up glorious poverty for Christ's sake, as did the Apostle Paul, and to serve both themselves and the needy by the work of their hands.††

2. If they desire to fulfill their monastic profession in reality and to

be glorified with the Apostle, let them disperse their former wealth and let them fight the good fight (II St. Timothy 4:7), with Paul, in hunger and thirst and in cold and nakedness (II Corinthians 11:27; *cf.* I Corinthians 4:11-12).

3. For if the same Apostle had known that maintaining one's former wealth was necessary for perfection, he would not have disdained his own dignity; for he says that he was a person of note and a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-28).

4. And those in Jerusalem who sold their houses and lands and placed the proceeds thereof at the Apostles' feet (Acts 4:34-35) would not have done this, had they been taught by the Apostles that it was more blessed to be sustained by one's own funds than by one's hard toil and by the offerings of those Gentiles who had become Christians.

5. The aforementioned Apostle Paul teaches more clearly about these matters in his Epistle to the Romans: "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaïa to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are" (Romans 15:25-27).

6. Moreover, he himself—being frequently in chains and in prison, and exhausted by the vexations of travel, and thus usually prevented from providing for his needs by his own hands—relates that he received these necessities from brethren who came to him from Macedonia: "[F]or that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied" (II Corinthians 11:9).

7. He writes the following to the Philippians: "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity" (Philippians 4:15-16). Therefore, were these men more blessed than the Apostle, because they provided for his needs from their own resources? ††† Even an utter fool would not dare to say this.

G. From St. Isaac the Syrian

1. When you make it a rule for your soul, that you should edify yourself through almsgiving, accustom your soul not to seek justification in various other deeds, lest you find yourself gathering with one hand and scattering with the other.

2. For in the latter case, when you endeavor to justify yourself, you are concerned with your own affairs, whereas in the former case, when you give alms, you need breadth of heart. Indeed, unless he who gives alms rises above a sense of justice, he cannot attain to perfection in almsgiving. He will attain to this if he not only gives alms to other men from his own resources, but also endures injustice from others with joy, and even shows mercy to them.

3. When one transcends justice through almsgiving, then he is crowned not with the crowns of those who are just in worldly terms, but with the crowns of those who have attained to Evangelical perfection; for the old Law dictated that one should give to the poor from his own means, clothe the naked, love one's neighbor as oneself, not do injustice, and not lie.

4. But the perfection of the Gospel says this: "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again" (St. Luke 6:30). He who would be perfect must not only endure injustice joyfully, with regard to his goods and the tribulations that come upon him from others, but must even lay down his life for his brother.†††† Such a man is truly merciful, and not he who shows mercy to his brother merely by offering him material assistance. Whoever hears or sees anything that distresses his brother, and thereby experiences a burning in his heart, he too is truly merciful. Likewise also, he is merciful who is insulted by his brother and does not behave shamefully or answer with a slight that would grieve his brother's heart. †††††

5. If you wish to acquire almsgiving, first accustom yourself to despising all things, lest your mind be dragged down by the weight thereof and depart from its proper limits; for the purity of one's almsgiving is shown in the patience with which he endures injustice.

6. If you are truly merciful, when you are unjustly deprived of your belongings, do not sorrow inwardly or relate your loss to others but, rather, let the wickedness of those who have dealt unjustly with you be

swallowed up by compassion, just as the astringency of wine is neutralized when a large quantity of water is mixed with it; and by the abundance of your almsgiving, demonstrate by just how many good deeds you repay those who wrong you, just as the blessed Elissaios did to those who had come to take him captive.

7. For when, while praying, he struck them blind with mist, he displayed the power that was in him; but when he gave them food and drink and allowed them to depart, he displayed his mercy (IV Kings 6:8-23).

H. From St. Maximos

1. The disposition of love may be ascertained not only through the offering of money to the poor, but much more through the imparting of the word of God to others and by serving their bodily needs.

2. He who has truly renounced the things of the world, and serves his neighbor through love without hypocrisy, is swiftly freed from every passion and rendered a partaker of Divine love and knowledge.

3. He who loves God assuredly loves his neighbor as well.‡ Such a person is unable to hold on to money, but dispenses it in the way that God enjoins, providing for everyone in need.

I. From St. Barsanouphios

A brother asked an Elder: "What is sympathy, and how is it engendered in a man?" The Elder replied: "Sympathy means to have compassion on one who is in need. But you should not be sympathetic to one who wishes to hold on to his own will. Sympathy is engendered in a man from his remembering what compassion God has on him, in order that he, too, might have compassion on his neighbor."

J. From the *Gerontikon*

1. A certain man offered money to an Elder and besought him to take it for his own needs. The Elder would not accept it, saying that whatever he earned by his handiwork was sufficient for him. The man persisted, imploring him to accept it so that he could at least use it to as-

sist those in need. The Elder replied: "This is a twofold shame for me, brother, for I will be receiving something that I do not need and I will fall into vainglory by distributing other peoples' money to the poor."

2. An Elder said: "If you give charity to someone, and you are bothered by the thought that you have given him too much, pay no heed to it; this thought is satanic. As far as possible, live in poverty and humility, so that you may always be in need of charity.

3. "For he who gives, rejoices, reckoning that he is doing a good work. He who does not have any money, but lives in poverty, attains to great humility, thinking that he is not in a position to do anything good. He does not give anyone anything, but is rather in need of charity himself. Thus did the Fathers live, thus did Abba Arsenios find God."

K. From St. Ephraim

1. Better a poor monk living in silence with humble-mindedness than a rich monk giving alms with arrogance and conceit.

2. Brothers, let us listen to him who says: "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil" (I St. Timothy 6:8-10).

* "[A]nd circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" (Romans 2:29); "Thou didst receive circumcision in the flesh of Thine own will, that Thou mightest make the shadows cease and roll away the veil of our passions" (*Apolytikion* of the Feast of the Circumcision)—*Trans.*

** See St. Basil the Great: "[God] calls us to Himself, urging us, on the one hand, to cast off the burden of great wealth by distributing it to the needy, and, on the other hand, to have recourse to the Cross-bearing life of monastics by rejecting, through beneficence and confession, the swarm of sins that derives from wealth" ("Ascetic Discourse," §1, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXI, col. 625C)—*Trans.*

*** "[T]he world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

**** "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (St. Matthew 5:7).

***** "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (St. Matthew 5:28).

• "Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms will make atonement for sins" (Ecclesiasticus 3:30); "By alms and by faithful dealings sins are purged away, but by the fear of the Lord everyone departeth from evil" (Proverbs 15:27).

•• "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him"

(St. Luke 17:3).

••• The Greek text printed in *The Evergetinos* differs somewhat from that found in the *Patrologia Græca*, but both versions have roughly the same meaning. The version printed in the *Patrologia Græca* (Vol. LXV, col. 972B) is as follows: "For in truth, wealth for us consists in an abundance of the various gifts bestowed upon us. Woe unto us, for we, who ask God for help and have often found mercy from Him, when asked for help ourselves, show mercy to no one, but receive our consolation"—*Trans.*

•••• Reading "*λίαν*" rather than "*Τί ἄν*" (see *Φιλοκαλία*, Vol. I, p. 254)—*Trans.*

••••• "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me" (St. Matthew 19:21). *Cf.* St. Mark 10:21; St. Luke 18:22.

† I have restored the words "in order that by virtue of the poverty that is dear to God he might proclaim the glad tidings of the wealth of the Kingdom of God"— which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from the *Φιλοκαλία* (Athens: Ekdotikos Oikos "Aster," 1974, Vol. I, p. 254)—*Trans.*

†† "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts 20:34); "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you" (II Thessalonians 3:8).

††† I have restored the sentence "Therefore, were these men more blessed than the Apostle, because they provided for his needs from their own resources?"—which is missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from the *Φιλοκαλία* (Athens: Ekdotikos Oikos "Aster," 1974, Vol. I, p. 69)—*Trans.*

†††† "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (St. John 15:13).

††††† I have restored the sentences, "Whoever hears or sees anything that distresses his brother and experiences a burning in his heart, he, too, is truly merciful," and "Likewise, also he is merciful who is insulted by his brother and does not behave shamefully or answer with a slight that would grieve his brother's heart"—which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from *Τοῦ Ὁσίου Πατρὸς Ἡμῶν Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ Σύρου Τὰ Εὑρεθέντα Ἀσκητικά*, ed. Nikephoros Theotokes (Thessaloniki: Ekdoseis Bas. Regopoulou, 1985, p. 92)—*Trans.*

‡ "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I St. John 4:20).

Hypothesis XLVIII

That oftentimes those who are poor and give alms to the best of their ability, and who subsequently acquire money, are overcome by avarice and cease the almsgiving that they previously did.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Daniel, the Presbyter of Sketis, recounted the following story: "When I was younger, I went to the Thebaid, to a certain village, to sell my handiwork. There was a man there by the name of Evlogios, a quarryman by profession, who had worked in this trade from an early age. He earned a *keration** of *noumia*** from his manual labor each day, and would go without eating until the evening.

2. "In the evening, he would go the village and offer hospitality in his house to any strangers whom he found there, washing their feet with his own hands—for he had no one else with him—and feeding them as best he could. With some of the leftover food fragments, he provided for his own natural needs, while he threw the remainder to the dogs of the village. Even to these creatures did this man display his compassion.

3. "He frequently entertained me, along with other brothers, which caused me to admire his virtue greatly. I was astonished by his compassion, the love he showed for his fellow men, and by his meek and humble demeanor. When I returned to Sketis, I stayed in my cell and applied myself to fasting for three weeks, beseeching God to provide Evlogios with more resources, so that he could benefit more people.

4. "As a result of this fasting, I became exhausted and lay in my cell half-dead. Borne down with sleep, I saw someone in priestly attire standing beside me, who said to me: 'Daniel, what is the matter with you?' I replied to him: 'I have given my word to Christ not to taste bread until He hearkens to my request concerning Evlogios the quarryman—that He provide him with funds so that he can benefit more people.'

Abba Daniel

5. "He answered: 'Do not insist on this; he is fine as he is. If he acquires more than he has, this will be harmful to his soul. However, if you really want me to endow him with wealth, and will vouch that he will save his soul by giving more alms, I will give him the money.' I said: 'Yes indeed, Lord, give it to him so that through him all might glorify Thy holy Name.' He replied: 'I repeat: he is fine as he is.' I said to Him: 'Let me be responsible for his soul.'

6. "It seemed to me that I immediately found myself in the Church of the Resurrection (in Jerusalem). I saw a young man sitting on the Holy Stone and Evlogios standing at his right. Looking at me, the young man said to the bystanders: 'Is this the man who vouched for Evlogios?' They answered: 'Yes, Master.' He then said: 'Tell him that I am going to hold him responsible, if any damage should be done to the soul of Evlogios.'

7. "I said to the young man, Who was the Master Christ Himself: 'Yes, Master, demand this from me, only give him the money'; and I saw them emptying a large amount of money into Evlogios' bosom. The more they poured in, the more it received. When I awoke, I realized that my prayer had been heard and I glorified God.

8. "Evlogios went out to do his manual work, as usual. After striking one particular rock, he heard a hollow sound. He dug away and found a cave full of money. In astonishment, he thought to himself: 'What am I to do? If I take it to the village, the ruler will hear about it and will come and take it from me, and I will be in danger. No, I will go instead to the outlying regions, where no one knows me.'

9. "He hired pack animals, supposedly for the purpose of transporting stones, transported the money to the river, loaded it on a boat, and went to Byzantium. At that time, Justin the Elder was Emperor.*** Evlogios gave a large amount of money to the Emperor and his nobles. Within a short time he became Praetorian Prefect.**** He also purchased a large house, which to this day is called the House of the Egyptian.

10. "After two years had elapsed, knowing nothing of what had happened, I saw in a dream that I was in the Church of the Resurrection, and again I saw that young man,***** sitting on the Holy Stone. Recalling Evlogios, I said to myself: 'Where might Evlogios be?' After a short

time, I saw Evlogios being dragged outside by an Ethiopian,• away from the gaze of the young man. On awakening, I realized what the dream meant, and I said to myself: 'Woe is me, the sinner, for I have lost my soul.'

11. "I arose and went to the village, ostensibly to sell my handiwork. While I was waiting to meet Evlogios, it grew very late and no one approached to offer me hospitality. So I got up and asked an old woman whom I met: 'Madam, please bring three rusks for me to eat, since I have not eaten anything today.'

12. "She went and brought me what I asked for and, sitting beside me, began to speak to me the following beneficial words, among others: 'Reverend Abba, do you not realize that you are young and should not come to the village, or are you unaware, perhaps, that the monastic *schema* requires seclusion?' I said to her: 'What then do you bid me do, for I have come here to sell my handiwork?' She replied: 'Even if you manage to sell your handiwork, do not linger so late in the village. If you want to be a true monk, go to Sketis.'

13. "I said to her: 'Is there not a God-fearing man in this village to provide strangers with a place to stay?' She replied to me: 'Oh, do you know what you bring to mind, Reverend Abba? We had a certain quarryman here, and he did many good deeds for strangers. Seeing his good works, God granted him His Grace. He is, as I hear, a Patrician these days.' When I heard this, I said to myself: 'I have brought about his death.'

14. "Without delay I embarked on a ship and sailed to Byzantium. Upon arrival, I asked where Evlogios' house was and, when I found out, I sat by the gate, wishing to see him coming out. When he finally emerged, I saw him amid great splendor and accompanied by a large retinue, and I said to him: 'Have mercy on me. There is something I wish to tell you in private.' He paid no heed to my request, and in fact his retainers began to beat me. I forestalled them and cried out again, and again they struck me.

15. "I persisted in this endeavor for four weeks, but was unable to meet with Evlogios. Finally, when I had called out to him once more, one of his servants ran up to me, brandishing a staff, and beat me with

it so hard that he left me almost half-dead. When, after some time, I had recovered a little, I said to myself: 'Let us go back to Sketis and, if God so wills, He will save Evlogios.' I went down to the harbor, where I found an Alexandrian boat on the point of departure. I embarked thereon, and as a result of my despondency and the blows that I had received, I was overcome with sleep.

16. "I then had a terrible dream. I saw myself yet again in the Church of the Resurrection, and that young man was sitting on the Holy Stone as before, gazing menacingly at me and saying: 'Are you not going to fulfill your pledge?' Out of fear I quivered like a leaf and•• could not so much as open my mouth. The young man gave orders to two of His attendants, and they seized me and bound my hands behind me. They then suspended me head downwards and said: 'Do not make pledges that are beyond your ability to fulfill and do not gainsay God.' Out of despondency and in pain as I was, I made no reply.

17. "While I was thus suspended, I heard a voice which said: 'The Empress is passing by.' When I beheld her, I plucked up courage and cried: 'Have mercy on me, O Sovereign Lady of the world.' She turned to me and said: 'What do you want?' 'I am suspended like this because of the pledge that I gave for Evlogios,' I replied. 'I will make entreaty for you,' she told me. I saw her go and kiss the feet of the young man, Who then said to me: 'Do not ever do this again.' I answered, trembling: 'No, Master, I will not, and forgive me.' At His command, the attendants set me free, and He said: 'Go back to your cell, and see how I shall restore Evlogios to his former estate.'

18. "I awoke with great joy at having being exonerated from such a pledge. I continued my voyage, and when I reached Alexandria, I made my way to Sketis, giving thanks to God.

19. "Three days later, I heard that Emperor Justin had died and that he had been succeeded by Justinian.••• After a short while, I learned that four grandees, one of whom was Evlogios, had rebelled against the new Emperor. Three of them were arrested and beheaded, but Evlogios fled by night. The Emperor ordered that wherever he might be found, he too should be put to death.

20. "As I diligently enquired about him, I found out that he had re-

turned to the same village and had resumed his work as a quarryman, not admitting to the locals that he was that man who had become a Patrician in Constantinople, but telling them that it was some other Egyptian by the same name. He insisted that he had been in the Holy Land all those years.

21. "So I went back to the village in order to ascertain exactly what had happened to Evlogios. When evening fell, Evlogios came out to offer hospitality to strangers. When I saw him, I sighed and said tearfully to God: 'O Lord, how magnified are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all' (Psalm 103:24). 'Truly, O Lord, Thou makest poor and enrichest, Thou humblest and exaltest' (*cf.* I Kings 2:7), and 'Thy judgments are unsearchable' (*cf.* Romans 11:33).'

22. "Evlogios led me, along with some other strangers, to his house, where he washed our feet and served us a meal. After we had eaten, I took him aside and said to him: 'How are you, Abba Evlogios?' 'Pray for me, Reverend Abba,' he replied, 'for I am lowly and have nothing except what I gain from the work of my hands.' I said to him: 'Would that you did not have even what you do have.' 'What do you mean, Reverend Abba?' he replied. 'Have I ever scandalized you in any way?'

23. "I then recounted to him everything that had happened. After weeping for some time, he said: 'Pray, Reverend Abba, that God will send me what I need, and from now on I will correct myself.' 'In truth, my son,' I told him, 'do not expect Christ to provide you—as long as you are in this world—with anything other than the *keration* that you earn from your daily work.' I bade him farewell and returned to Sketis.

24. "Evlogios continued working as a quarryman and entertaining strangers until the end of his life. Even when he reached the age of a hundred, he did not desist from this service—for God endowed him with strength—until he completed the course of the present life."

* A "*keration*" was an extremely small unit of weight—*Trans.*

**A *noumion* (or *noummion*) was the Greek equivalent of the sesterce (*sestertius*), a silver or bronze coin of ancient Rome, equivalent to one fourth of a *denarius*—*Trans.*

*** Justin I (reigned 518-527)—*Editors.*

**** See the endnotes for Hypothesis XXVI [*****], above.

***** Again, the young man was Christ.

• "The Devil frequently appears in Patristic texts in the guise of a black-faced Ethiopian" (*Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν*, Vol. III, p. 395, n. 16)—*Trans.*

•• I have restored the words, "quivered like a leaf and..."— which are missing from the printed text of *The Evergetinos*—from *Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικόν* (Vol. III, pp. 398-400)—*Trans.*

••• Justinian I (reigned 527-565)—*Editors.*

Hypothesis XLIX

That a monk should not receive indiscriminately from any person; nor should he take more than he needs. And that he who receives alms ought to labor (in prayer and fasting) for the sake of those who give them.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. A certain rich man once came from a foreign country to Raïthou and gave the brethren one *solidus* apiece, as an expression of love; he also sent one *solidus* to an Hesychast who lived in a cell there. That night, the Elder beheld a field filled with thistles and someone saying to him: "Go out and reap the field of the man who gave you alms."

2. In the morning, the Hesychast sent for the Christ-loving man who had sent him the *solidus* and returned it to him, saying: "Take back your money, brother, for I cannot reap another man's thistles. Would that I could eradicate my own."

3. An Elder said: "Perfect ascetics do not readily accept anything from laymen. Those at an intermediate level of spiritual attainment do not ask anyone to give them anything. If someone gives them something of his own accord, they accept it as sent from God. And if someone is very infirm and unable to work, let him ask for what he needs with great humility; but let him, nonetheless, always reproach himself for this."

4. Abba Makarios said: "If I have a certain item which is sufficient for my needs and someone brings the same item to me (especially if he is a layman), knowing that this derives from the activity of the Devil, I refuse it.

5. "But if I need something and do not have it, and in my mind I seek once or twice to obtain it, then God, knowing that I have need of it, brings it to me through someone, just as He did to Daniel in the lions' den, through the Prophet Avvakoum.*

6. "If I have the means by which I can procure my needs, such as a little silver or some *oboloi*, and I save the money rather than spending it, waiting for someone to bring me what I need for free, then I become like Judas Iscariot, who forsook the Grace that was given him and hastened to fulfill his avaricious desire."

7. We heard concerning a certain destitute brother, who lacked the basic necessities of life, that if someone brought him food that he needed and it subsequently happened that someone else also brought him something, the brother would not accept the latter offering of alms, saying: "My Lord has already nourished me, and that is enough for me."

8. Abba Phortas said: "If God wishes me to live, He knows how to provide for me; if He does not so desire, what is the purpose of my living?" For he did not accept charity from everyone, even though he was bedridden. He used to say, by way of explanation: "If anyone offers me something, and does not do so for the sake of God, but to fulfill some human obligation, and I accept it, I do wrong to the one who offers it; for neither do I have anything to give him in return, nor will he receive** a reward from God."

B. From Palladios***

1. We once saw the great ascetic Bessarion, who was exceedingly meek and endowed with great compunction. While we were sitting, talking, and listening to his soul-profiting and salutary teachings, Abba Miles**** entered his cell and, after greeting the Elder, said: "So-and-so, our lay helper, who constantly visited us in this desert, has died. But just as he managed his affairs well during his life, so also in death has he settled them well—indeed better. For he has bequeathed his estate to the convent that Elias the Ascetic built, in which he has brought together three hundred nuns."

2. When the Elder heard this, he began to lament and smite his face, saying: "Woe is me, a sinner! He has given joy to the Devil and done great harm to the nuns. He has lost his reward, and yet you say that he settled his affairs well?" When we heard what the Elder said, we disputed his words and said, "How could he have any greater reward than to help nuns who are espoused to Christ and who serve Him alone?" The Elder replied: "Believe me, my sons, I too once suffered just such a

fate as his.

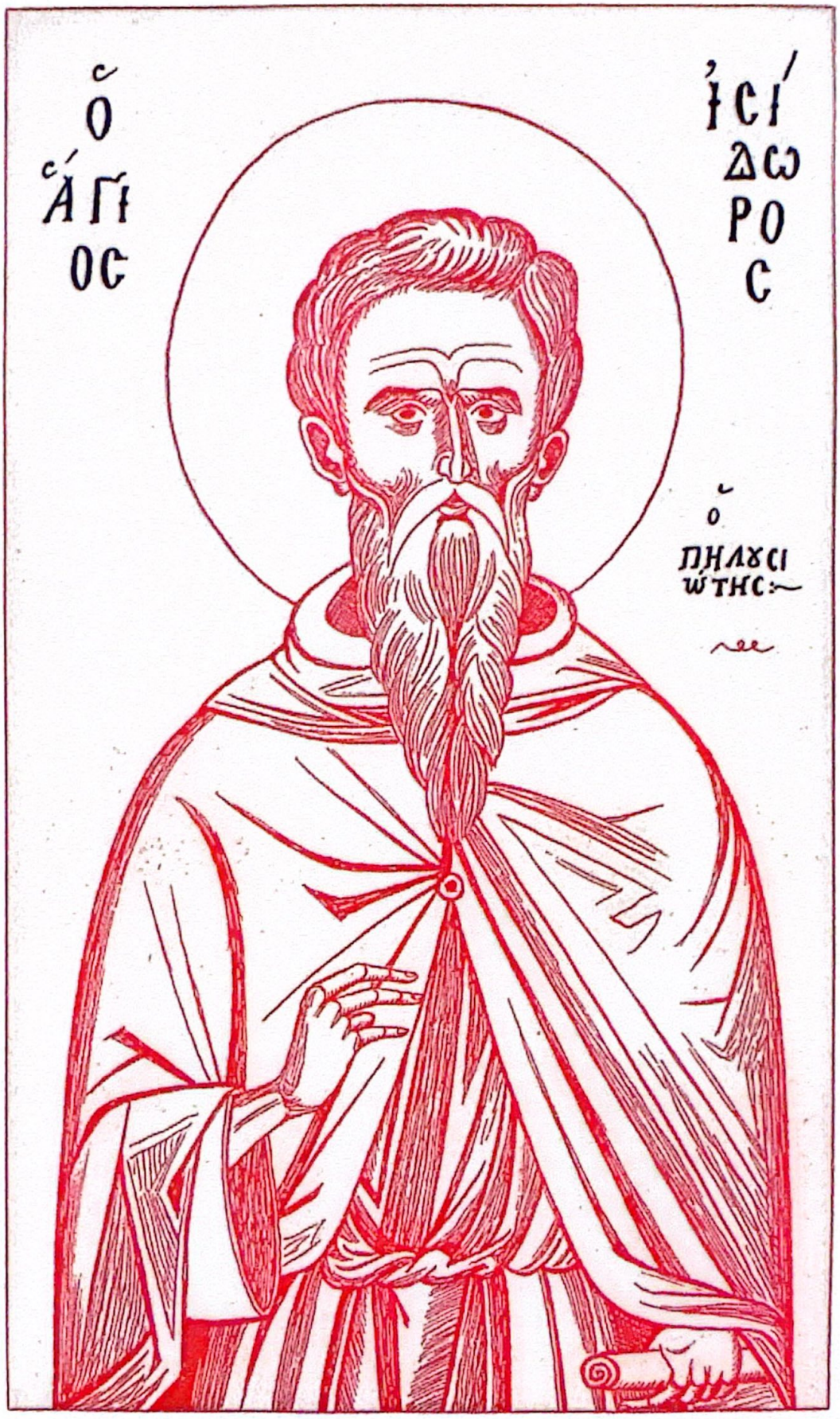
3. "I once saw Abba Gerasimos, of whom mention is made in the Life of Evthymios the Great. After going up to Jerusalem, where I worshipped at the holy places, I then returned. At that time, I was twenty-five years old. When I heard about his death, and how the lion roared with sorrow over his grave and died there, I was smitten in my heart with love for God. I immediately gave away all my belongings, leaving only an estate for the use of the nuns at the large convent in Alexandria.

4. "I went and related the matter to Abba Isidore of Pelousion, saying: 'Abba, I wish, God willing, to renounce the world, and to this end I have distributed all my belongings. I have retained an estate for the use of the nuns, which the *Augoustalios****** is seeking to purchase, offering me seventy pounds of gold for the price. Should I give it to him, or not?' The Elder said to me: 'If it is worth seventy pounds, sell it to him for fifty, take the gold and offer it to the nuns, and you will have a greater reward. But if you give them the property, you will cause them to be embroiled in many worldly disturbances and distractions, and they may fall into the pit of fornication.'•

5. "However, I did not obey the Elder, but returned to Alexandria, where I drew up a quitclaim, setting forth my donation in writing and validating it with my own signature, in the presence of the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, with all of his clergy, and of the *Augoustalios*, who witnessed my act of donation. After delivering the title deed to the nuns, I immediately left for Sketis.

6. "After sixteen months had elapsed, I dreamt that I was standing in a Church in Bethlehem. As I gazed at the sanctuary, I beheld it flooded with a miraculous and ineffable light and saw men of venerable appearance, chanting hymns, and a woman clothed in purple, whose beauty it is impossible to describe.

7. "Astonished, therefore, and filled with fear on account of that dread sight, I wanted to depart; but one of those august men, more imposing than the rest, came out to me and said, with a severe voice and a grim mien: 'Tell me, Evstathios (for this was my secular name), what defense do you propose to offer regarding those nuns, since from the day that you gave them the estate, they have angered the Lord. I will



Abba Isidore of Pelousion

soon end your life, unless you immediately correct your mistake.'

8. "Quaking with fear, I answered him: 'Sir, I gave them the estate, along with the slaves and the yokes of oxen, in order to afford them relief, not in order to anger God.'

9. "At this point, the woman clothed in purple opened her holy mouth and said to me with a gentle voice: 'We have accepted your good intention, my child, but the Devil, the adversary of the human race, finding an opportunity in this gift, has wounded them in both soul and body. God, Who provides for them, could have caused entire rivers of gold to gush forth and could have given them the gold. But that is not to their benefit. For those who have renounced the world for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven ought to wait on God with hardship, toil, great humble-mindedness, and poverty, undistracted by the cares of this life, and not in extravagance, vainglory, or wealth.'

10. "Stretching forth her hand, and indicating with it him who had spoken to me before her, she said: 'This is John the Baptist, the instructor of monastics, and those who want to be with him in the Kingdom of Heaven should emulate his virtues.' She also said to me: 'Go and correct your mistake, and you will have me as your helper.' She then looked at the Forerunner and said to him: 'O Baptist, make the sign of the Cross over his heart, lest he suppose that the words we spoke to him were an illusion.' The Forerunner stretched forth his right hand and sealed my heart with the sign of the Cross.

11. "I immediately came to, and at that very moment I took my staff and a few loaves of bread, since the journey was long, and went to Abba Isidore. After I had related the vision to him, he told me the following: 'Do you not know that estates need tendance and cultivation, tasks which require men's hands? If men enter convents, the Devil leaves neither the nuns nor the men untroubled. If it is completely inappropriate for monks to be occupied with earthly distractions, how much more so is it for nuns.'

12. "Taking the Elder along for company, I went to the convent. After we had gone into the Church and prayed, we summoned the senior nuns and said to them: 'What are we to do? For the Emperor's representative is coming to take away the estate from you and turn it over to

the Patriarchate.' They answered: 'As you know what is good and profitable for us, thus command, and we will carry out your orders.'

13. "I said to them: 'I cannot go against the Emperor's representative. Therefore, if you wish, before he comes let us sell the estate to the *Augoustalios*, and you will receive the money. Let him deal with the Emperor's representative as he will.' 'Well said,' they replied, 'let it be as you suggest.'

14. "I at once went and sold the estate to the *Augoustalios* for sixty pounds of gold, and at the same time I freed the slaves. Taking the gold and returning to the convent, I deposited it in the Church before the Altar. Along with Abba Isidore I bade the nuns farewell, and we departed.

15. "I said to the Elder: 'I almost lost my soul, Father; the Fathers were right in saying, "Do not give alms to women."' The Elder responded to me: 'Do not say such things, my son, for you are sinning. I tell you, of a truth, let him who has money, and wishes to receive a reward, give alms to nuns; for he who gives charity to them receives a greater reward from God than if he were to give it to the blind, lepers, the lame, or the maimed, since nuns, being the weaker part of the common body of the Church, have renounced the world and live in poverty for God's sake. They cannot go out, as we do, to sell their handiwork, nor do they possess the hardiness to minister to their needs or to leave their convents for any reason.

16. "'For, if any nun should exit from the gate of her convent, all of those who hunt after evil will immediately take aim at her, as if a hind has appeared, and will endeavor to shoot her from all sides. If it happens that she is not wounded, which is difficult and well nigh impossible, no small harm befalls those smitten by her. But even if, though wounded in a vital part of her body, she succeeds in evading the hunters, she is no less at risk. For if she departs after leaving the missile behind, that is, the person by whom she was wounded through unguardedness, she is nonetheless destroyed by the wound, and especially if she leaves it unattended, so that it stinks and festers, as the Prophet says.••

17. "'For all of these reasons, he who is able to minister to nuns for God's sake, and to help them avoid going out of their convents, will re-

ceive a reward from God one hundred times greater than he who gives alms to the poor and infirm. Likewise, he who ministers to monks who live in poverty for God's sake has great and unsurpassable recompense from on high; for "[h]e that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (St. Matthew 10:41); and "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (St. Matthew 10:42).

18. "'However, it behooves one to exercise discretion and not to furnish either a monastery or a convent with items that occasion distractions, cares, and disturbances to those who desire to live according to God; for in so doing, he will not benefit them, but will, rather, harm them and cause them very serious damage.

19. "'No, he who wishes to minister to them and afford them relief should give them only those items which enable them to concentrate without distraction on spiritual matters, such as wheat, flour, pulses, small change, clothing, woollen or linen fabrics, and the like: whatever necessities are easily provided to them and enhance their worship of God, not leading them away from devotion to Him and concern for their souls.'"

* "And the Angel of the Lord said to Avvakoum: 'Go, carry the meal that you have to Babylon, to Daniel in the lions' den'" (Bel and the Dragon 34).

** I have here followed the reading "*λαμβάνει*" in preference to "*λαμβάνω*" (see *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 436B)—*Trans.*

*** It is improbable that this section is properly attributed to Palladios—*Editors.*

**** Abba Miles is called "Abba Milesios" in other sources, including the *Patrologia Graeca*—*Editors.*

***** From the second half of the fourth century "Augoustalios" was the title of the Imperial Prefect of Egypt—*Trans.*

• The nuns would incur this risk through having to administer the estate, thereby coming into contact with worldly people—*Trans.*

•• "My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness" (Psalm 37:6).

Hypothesis L

That we should stay away from those things that do not concern us, or which belong to others, as being ruinous.

A. From the *Gerontikon*

1. Abba Agathon was once travelling with his disciples, when one of them found on the road a small fresh pea. He asked the Elder: "Father, may I have a blessing to take this?" The Elder stared the brother in the eye for some time, astonished at the inappropriateness of his question, and then asked him: "Did you put this here?" "No," the brother replied. The Elder said: "Then how is it that you wish to take what you did not put down?"

2. It was said of Abba Zeno that he was once walking in Palestine and, feeling tired, sat down to eat near a cucumber patch. Then a thought came to him: "Pick a cucumber and eat it. It won't matter." But he responded to the thought: "Thieves go off to punishment. So test yourself, and see whether you can endure torment." So, he began to beat himself.* Then he said in his mind: "If you cannot endure this punishment, then do not steal in order to eat."

3. Abba Isaac said: "I know of a brother who, while harvesting in a field, desired to eat an ear of wheat. And he asked the owner of the field: 'Will you allow me to eat an ear of wheat?' On hearing this, the latter marvelled at the brother's strictness, and said to him: 'The field is yours, Father; take from it whatever you wish.'"

4. A brother came to Abba Agathon and said to him: "Allow me to dwell with you." The brother had with him a little niter,** which he had found on the road while on the way and had brought to the Elder. The Elder then said to him, "Where did you find this?" "I found it on the road as I was walking, and I took it and brought it to you." The Elder said: "If you wish to come and dwell with me, how is it that you took something that you did not put there? Go and put it where you found it, and only then come back." The brother did so and returned to the

Elder.

5. One of the Elders said of Abba John the Persian that, on account of his great virtue, he had achieved the most profound guilelessness. He lived in Arabian Egypt.*** One day, he borrowed a gold coin—that is, a *solidus*—from a certain brother and bought some flax in order to do his handiwork. Then a brother came to him and begged from him, saying, "Give me a little flax, Abba, so that I can make myself an apron." And he cheerfully gave him some.

6. Then another brother came and likewise asked of him, saying: "Give me some flax, so that I can make myself a *lebiton*."**** And the Elder gladly gave him some, too. Then a third came and asked likewise, and he gave him some flax. And still others came asking, and to all he gave, in his simplicity, until not one bit of flax remained.

7. After a few days, the one who had lent him the money came asking to be repaid. The Elder said to him: "Depart, and I will bring it to you." Not having any means to pay back the money, he decided to go to Abba James, the steward, to ask him for a *solidus*, so that he could pay back the brother. On the way there, he found a *solidus* lying on the ground. But he did not touch it. He simply said a prayer and then returned to his cell.

8. The brother came again, pestering him and demanding the money. The Elder said to him: "Be patient just a little longer, and I will make absolutely sure to return the money to you." After the brother had departed, the Elder set off again to visit Abba James. When he reached the spot where he had first seen the *solidus*, he again found it lying on the ground, as before; once more, he said a prayer and returned to his cell.

9. A short time later, the brother came yet again, demanding to be paid back. The Elder said to him: "Rest assured, this time I will bring it to you." He arose and returned to that spot, where he found the same coin still lying on the ground. This time, he said a prayer and took it. He then went to Abba James and said to him: "Abba, as I was coming to see you, I found this *solidus* on the path. Do me a favor, therefore, and announce this in our locality, in case someone has lost it. If its owner is found, please give it to him."

10. So Abba James went and announced the matter for three days, but no one was found to have lost the coin. Abba John then said to Abba James: "If no one has lost it, give it to this brother, for I owe it to him. As I was coming to you to ask for assistance in repaying my debt, I found it." When the Elder heard this, he marvelled at how Abba John, although in debt and finding that coin, had not picked it up at once and given it back to his creditor.

11. The same Elder, that is, Abba John, had another admirable principle. If anyone came to borrow something from him, he would not himself provide what his visitor was asking for, but would tell him: "Help yourself to whatever you need." If the borrower subsequently brought the item back, the Elder would say to him: "Put it back in the place where you found it." If he did not return what he had borrowed, the Elder would not demand it back.

12. There was a certain Elder, Philagrios by name, who lived in the desert outside Jerusalem. He toiled in his handiwork so as to earn his own bread. One day, when he went to the marketplace to sell his wares, he came across a purse containing a thousand *solidi*, which someone passing through there had lost.

13. When the Elder found it, he stayed at that spot and said: "The person who lost it will surely come back and look for it." And lo and behold, a short time later a man did come, weeping and asking about the purse. The Elder took him aside and returned it to him intact.

14. The owner of the purse took out a portion of the money and demanded that the Elder take it; but Philagrios would not accept it. The man persisted in his entreaties, but when he could not persuade the Elder, he began to cry: "Come and see what this man of God has done for me." The Elder secretly escaped and left the city to avoid being praised for what he had done.

15. A certain brother, while travelling, found on the road a log, which had fallen off a camel laden with wood. He picked it up and took it to his cell. When his Abba saw the log, he asked the brother: "Where did you find it?" "On the road," replied the brother. The Elder said to him: "If it was driven by the wind, that is, if by chance it was carried by the wind from the forest and thrown down there, keep it inside; if not,

go and put it back in the place where you found it." The brother returned and threw it down on the road.

* According to another version of this anecdote, Abba Zeno forced himself to stand in the heat of the sun for five days until his skin became burnt (See Abba Zeno, §6, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. LXV, col. 177B)—*Editors.*

** Potassium nitrate or saltpeter, which in the ancient world was mixed with olive oil or animal fat and used as soap—*Trans.*

*** The region near Sinai; that is, Arabia Petræa ("Stony Arabia").

**** See the the endnotes for Hypothesis XXVI, above.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK OF *THE EVERGETINOS*
AND TO GOD THE GLORY
❄ AMEN ❄

Glossary of General Terms in Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Christianity*

Abba: Aramaic word for "Father," used as a title for monks and other clergy.

Abbess: The spiritual Mother of a convent. (See "Spiritual Mother.")

Abbot: The spiritual Father of a monastery (often a simple monk). (See "Spiritual Father.")

Amma: Feminine form of "Abba," or "Mother," used as a title for nuns.

Anchorite: A monastic living in solitude and isolation from other monastics.

Archbishop: Bishop of a large or important diocese with the distinction of being an Archdiocese; a Bishop with this honorary title. (See "Bishop.")

Archimandrite: The highest rank below that of Bishop, given to a Hieromonk. (See "Hieromonk.")

Bishop: The head of a diocese or local Church. In the Christian East, all Bishops, regardless of rank or administrative authority, are considered equal in doctrinal authority. They may not be married at the time of their Consecrations. In ascending administrative rank, episcopal titles are: Bishop, Archbishop, Metropolitan, and Patriarch. In the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Patriarch of Constantinople holds the title of "Œcumenical Patriarch," or "*Primus inter Pares*" (the first among equals). (See "Priest.")

Brother: A term for monastics in general; in Eastern Christian tradition, the term is used for novices and by monks and Bishops in addressing one another privately. Formally, unlike in the West, all monks in the East are called "Father," following their Tonsure. (See "Tonsure.")

***Cœnobion*:** A monastic community in which monks or nuns live in a common compound, take meals together, and worship in common. They also hold all things in common and are governed by an Abbot or Abbess or a similar superior.

Cœnobite: One who lives in a *cœnobion*.

Commune: To partake of the Eucharist. In modern Eastern Christian practice, the Eucharist is administered from the Bread and Wine (Body and Blood), which are intermingled in the Chalice, with a liturgical spoon.

Confession: The Mystery of confessing one's sins to a Priest, followed by a prayer of forgiveness or absolution. Also, the sharing of sins or spiritual concerns with

an Elder or spiritual advisor, including spiritual Fathers and spiritual Mothers, though without the bestowal of the formal prayers of absolution.

Convent: A community of nuns. (See "*Cœnobion*" and "Skete.")

Council: A gathering of Bishops from one or more of the local Orthodox Churches for the purpose of making administrative decisions or examining doctrinal matters. Councils of this kind are often called "Pan-Orthodox Councils." Their decisions are considered binding and valid only when they are in concord with the decisions of the Œcumenical Synods and the traditional doctrines of the Orthodox Church. Councils are sometimes referred to as "Synods." (See "Œcumenical Synod.")

Deacon: See "Priest."

Desert: Any isolated wilderness area; the sense of isolation cultivated by monastic men or women, regardless of their geographical location.

Desert Fathers: An inclusive term for male and female monastics (sometimes called Desert Mothers), usually in reference to the Egyptian desert and the Abbas and Ammas who lived there. (See "Sketis.") The term can be more generally applied to monastics living in any isolated area.

Eastern Christianity: Those Christians not belonging to the Christian communities of the West; i.e., who are neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant. Historically, they trace their roots to the earliest Christian communities in the Holy Land and North Africa. The majority of Eastern Christians identify themselves as Eastern Orthodox Christians, who accept the decisions of the Œcumenical Synod of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) and maintain ties to the Patriarch of Constantinople. The members of the various non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches, who reject the decisions of that Synod, are often called "Oriental Orthodox" Christians (which includes the Coptic Orthodox).

Elder (Gr., *Geron* or *Gerontas*): A monastic of wide spiritual experience or notable spiritual gifts who offers spiritual advice and guidance to other monastics. Often imprecisely translated as "old man."

Eldress: A female Elder.

Eucharist: The Body and Blood of Christ, imparted at the Divine Liturgy and in reserved form to the ill and those distant from a Church.

Fasting: Refraining from any food or drink, in some cases, or, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, as well as Lenten periods before Pascha (the proper Eastern Christian term for Easter), the Nativity Feast (Christmas), and other Great Feasts, from meat and dairy products and, in most instances, from fish, wine, and oil, too. Though Eastern Christian monastics are normally vegetarians and refrain from eating meat at any time, their fasting practices are also followed by the lay faithful, except for the Monday fast, which is primarily

monastic.

Gathering (*Synaxis*): A meeting in which monastics and monastic Elders gather for spiritual instructions or discussions. Also often used to refer to common Church services, including the Divine Liturgy.

Hesychasm: Derived from the Greek word for "silence," the word "Hesychasm" refers to an ancient form of inner prayer, practiced widely by the desert Fathers. It centers particularly on the recitation of the "Jesus Prayer" ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner," in its most common form), in conjunction with concentration on the heart (hence, the "Jesus Prayer" is also called the "Prayer of the Heart") and certain ascetic and physical disciplines, as well as the control of breathing, whereby one comes, through the purification of the senses, to a vision of Divine light, or the uncreated Energies of God. This inner cleansing and consequent transformation, in which the mind and the heart find union in Grace, lead to man's deification (*theosis*)—even, to some extent, in this life—by union with the Energies of God (though not with His Essence, which remains ineffable, unfathomable, and beyond man's ken). Enlightenment and divinization in Christ are the ultimate aims of Hesychasm and define, for the Orthodox Christian, human salvation. The writings in *The Evergetinos* describe the struggle for *theosis* in the ancient desert. Hesychastic principles and teachings are also found in the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa, Evagrios of Pontos, St. Diadochos of Photike, St. Maximos the Confessor, St. Symeon the New Theologian, St. Gregory of Sinai, and St. Nicephoros of Mt. Athos, and those of many other Church Fathers. St. Gregory Palamas, in the fourteenth century, is credited with setting forth this ancient tradition in its fullest form in his lofty apologetic discourses. A collection of writings on Hesychasm—a companion volume, of sorts, to *The Evergetinos*—was compiled by St. Makarios of Corinth and St. Nikodemos and published in Venice, in 1782, as *The Philokalia*. An English translation of this classic of Orthodox spirituality is still in progress; four of the five volumes of the work have been published to date.

Hesychast: One who practices Hesychasm. (See "Hesychasm.")

Hesychasterion: A hermitage or a monastic institution dedicated to the practice of Hesychasm. (See "Hesychasm.")

Hierarch: A Bishop of any rank.

Hierodeacon, Hieromonk: A monastic Deacon or Presbyter, respectively. (See "Priest.")

Liturgy: In Eastern Christianity, the Eucharistic service; usually, "Divine Liturgy." Often wrongly called the "Mass," a term unknown in Eastern Christian tradition.

Metropolitan: The Bishop of a very large or important diocese with the dis-

tinction of being a Metropolia; a Bishop with this honorary title (usually the President, or chief Hierarch, of a Synod of Bishops). (See "Bishop.")

Monastery: A community of monks. (See "*Cœnobion*" and "Skete.")

Mystery (*Mysterion*): The proper term, in Eastern Christian nomenclature, for a "Sacrament." While the latter term is used widely by English-speaking Orthodox, it conveys what in Western Christianity is a concept less broad and encompassing than that designated by the word "Mystery." In Eastern Christianity, almost any act which conveys Grace is considered a Mystery, without specifying seven particular "Sacraments" (though this idea was imported into Eastern Christianity from the West, both by imitation and in responding to Western Christian theological thought). Nor, in the East, is a distinction made, as in the West, between the acts and ordinances established by Christ Himself and so-called *sacramentalia*, or Grace that is bestowed *ex opere operato* and Grace bestowed *quasi ex opere operato*.

Novice: One who is being tested for the monastic Tonsure, normally for a period of three years. (See "Tonsure.")

Œcumenical Synod: A gathering of the Bishops of all of the local and national Orthodox Churches for the purpose of making administrative decisions or defending traditional Orthodox doctrine. The decisions of such Synods, when accepted by the entire Church (seven, and sometimes eight, Synods are considered œcumenical in the Eastern Orthodox Church), are absolutely binding on the Church. All subsequent Councils and Synods must conform to the doctrinal statements of the Œcumenical Synods, which are sometimes referred to as "Œcumenical Councils." (See "Council.")

Orthodox Christianity: See "Eastern Christianity."

Patriarch: Bishop of a local, national, or regional Church of great historical importance or extensive geographical territory. The Western term "Pope" is synonymous with "Patriarch." (See "Bishop.")

Priest: A clergyman ordained by a Bishop to serve a monastic community or a parish. The members of the Priesthood are, in ascending rank, Deacon, Presbyter, and Bishop. All three ranks belong to the Priesthood, though the Presbyter is most often referred to singly by the term "Priest." In the Eastern Church, Deacons and Presbyters may be married or unmarried, though all Bishops are celibate. There are also lower ranks of clergy that are often associated with the Priesthood, including Subdeacons and Readers (Chanters). (See "Bishop" and "Hierodeacon, Hieromonk.")

Schema: This term, from the Greek word for "form," "plan," or "design," is used in the early centuries of monasticism to describe the monastic habit in general (*schema*). There is also a specific garment, the *Analabos*, often called the "*Schema*" or the "Great *Schema*," which is worn by Eastern Christian monastics of the

highest grade, who are called "Schema-monks" or "Schema-nuns." (There are three monastic grades: that of Rasophore, that of the Small *Schema*, and that of the Great *Schema*, though, according to some authorities, monastics of the Small *Schema* and the Great *Schema* properly belong to a single rank.) The *Schema* is draped over the shoulders, hanging down the back, just below the neck, and down the front of the body, as well. It is emblazoned, on the front, with a Cross, the instruments of the Crucifixion, and various letters that refer to Christ and the spiritual powers available to the monk or nun in his or her spiritual struggles. The front part of the Great *Schema* covers the torso, while the front portion of the Small *Schema* is much shorter and covers the thorax.

Skete: A small community of monastic hermits, normally comprised of private hermitages (huts or cells) and a Church or Chapel for common worship.

Sketis (Wadi el Natrun, Wadi el-Natrun, Wadi al Natrun, Wadi al-Natrun): A valley in the southern part of the Nitrian Desert in Egypt, to the west of the mouths of the Nile River. In the fourth and fifth centuries, especially, but even as late as the seventh century, hundreds of monasteries flourished in Sketis. The name comes from the Greek for "ascetic" and refers to the immense number of ascetic monastics (hundreds of thousands, according to some authorities) who inhabited the area. The term is often loosely, if somewhat inaccurately, used to refer inclusively to what were actually distinct and specific monastic communities in the Nitrian Desert. With the Moslem conquest of Egypt in 641 A.D., the monastic communities of Sketis were destroyed. (See "Skete.")

Spiritual Father: In the case of a Priest, a Confessor; in the case of a monk, a spiritual advisor. (See "Confession.")

Spiritual Mother: A nun who is a spiritual advisor. (See "Confession.")

Superior: An Abbot or Abbess or someone in charge of a monastic community or a ranking clergyman in a parish.

Synod: A term often used to refer to a formal meeting of the Hierarchs of a Synod of Bishops.

Synod of Bishops: In the Eastern Church, a council of Bishops who administer a local or national Church body, the senior member of which acts as its President; the basic organ of administrative conciliarity in the Eastern Church.

Tonsure: The cutting of the hair, by which a novice is formally accepted into monastic ranks. This monastic custom developed in the fourth century and was, contrary to the claims of some authorities, not universally followed in the Egyptian desert, where acceptance into the monastic estate was often very informal.

* This list is not meant to be exhaustive. It essays simply to give the reader some familiarity with Eastern Christian nomenclature, which is often inconsistent and influenced by extraneous traditions. We have also avoided, here, reiterating definitions found in the text or in endnotes, except when further elaboration seemed appropriate.

Index of Selected Names in Book III

Agathon, St., 21, 51, 56, 291-292, 293, 306, 310, 317-318, 329, 410

Alypios the Stylite, St., 376-377

Ammoes, St., 108-109

Ammonas, St., 21-23, 99, 228

Ammoun, St., 118, 125

Anastasios the Sinaite, St., 17-20, 222-226

Anoub, St., 27

Anthony the Great, St., 21, 64, 95-96, 118, 125, 126, 177, 228, 230, 235-236, 241, 260, 277, 284, 285, 291, 293, 353

Antiochos, St., (author of the *Pandects*), 12, 89-91, 217

Apollo, St., 292, 333

Arcadios, Emperor, 386

Arsenios the Great, St., 102, 142, 187, 195, 312, 386-387, 394

Athanasios the Great, St., Archbishop of Alexandria, 40-41, 126, 285

Barsanouphios the Great, St., 34-37, 115-117, 135-136, 259, 267-270, 315, 330-332, 338-339, 349-351, 381-382, 393

Benedict of Nursia, St., 363-364

Bessarion, St., 23, 54, 65, 281, 404

Daniel of Sketis, St., 124-125, 191, 203, 396-397

Diadochos, St., Bishop of Photike, 77, 115, 123-124, 131-132, 137, 316-317, 388-390, 417

Ephraim the Syrian, St., 32, 37, 41, 43-44, 47, 67-68, 86-89, 98-99, 101, 109-112, 117, 123, 125-126, 137, 158-159, 170-171, 177-178, 182-183, 203-205, 239-240, 259-260, 315, 330, 335-336, 351, 394

Epiphanios, St., Bishop of Cyprus, 83

Evagrios of Pontos, Abba, 148, 240, 417

Evthymios the Great, St., 201, 289-290, 365, 405

Gerasimos of the Jordan, St., 405

Gregory the Dialogist (the Great), St., Pope of Rome, 48, 50, 127-128, 129-131, 138-140, 148-149, 275-277, 300-304, 360-364, 382

Gregory the Wonderworker, St., Bishop of Neocæsarea, 45-47

Hyperechios, St., 271-273

Ioannikios the Great, St., 121-123, 288-289

Isaac the Syrian, St., 50, 78-80, 99, 160, 165-167, 184, 240, 254, 262, 271, 391-393

Isaiah, St., 6, 12-14, 23, 42, 51-52, 59-61, 67, 69-73, 91, 123, 134-135, 159-160, 183-184, 193, 198, 260, 270, 298, 315-316, 329-330, 336-338, 339, 350, 351, 355-358, 381

Isidore of Pelousion, St., 405-409

John Cassian, St., 91-95, 101, 184-186, 217-219, 220, 231-238, 241, 343, 390-391

John the Almsgiver (the Merciful), St., Patriarch of Alexandria, 1-6, 168-170, 263-264, 372-376

John the Short, St., 10, 40, 69, 178, 180, 291, 310-311

John the Theologian, St., 81-83, 387

Joseph of Panephysis (Panepho), St., 10, 187-190, 293, 340, 344-345

Justinian the Great, St., 172-173, 400, 402

Longinos, St., 109, 228-230, 281

Lot, St., 312, 335

Loukios, St., 228-230

Luke the New (of Steirion), St., 107-108, 134, 364

Makarios the Egyptian, St., 24, 40, 56-59, 164, 176, 293, 344, 352-353, 354, 403-404

Marcian the Presbyter, St., 365-369

Mark the Ascetic, St., 14-17, 43, 50, 52, 73-77, 91, 164, 178, 193, 205, 231, 242-245, 246-254, 270-271, 387-388

Matoes, St., 178

Maximos the Confessor, St., 6-7, 20, 42-43, 50, 52, 64, 77-78, 95, 108, 160-161, 186-187, 193, 220, 226, 238-239, 255-258, 317, 393, 417

Moses the Ethiopian, St., 10-11, 24, 67, 95, 113, 143-145, 161-162, 164, 198, 342

Nicholas, St., Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, 319-323

Nisthero, St., 27, 66-67, 191, 230, 377

Nonnos, St., 38-40

Or, St., 196

Pachomios the Great, St., 69, 103-107, 201-203, 264-267, 277-280, 285, 325-328, 348-349

Palamon, St., 103, 277-279

Palladios, 61-64, 146-148, 206-208, 286-288, 299-300, 333, 404-409

Pambo, St., 11, 40-41, 226, 379

Paphnoutios, St., 28, 294

Paul Evergetinos, Father, 32, 101, 114-115, 144, 329, 332, 343-344, 347, 353-354, 364

Paulinus, St., Bishop of Nola, 300-302

Pelagia, St., 38-40

Pior, St., 27-28

Poimen, St., 7, 10-11, 24, 25-27, 54, 69, 97-98, 136, 174, 191, 216, 220, 221, 230, 293-294, 311-312, 328-329, 342

Sarah, St., 176, 345

Savvas the Sanctified, St., 144, 155-158, 172-173, 304-305

Serapion the Sindonite, St., 125, 286-288, 376, 383

Silouan, St., 67, 162, 329, 344

Sisoes, St., 174, 175, 191-192, 231, 260, 283, 294, 313, 345-346

Stephen the New, St., 140-142

Synkletike, St., 11-12, 53-54, 66, 85-86, 101, 107, 132-134, 149-152, 179-180, 208-211, 384-386

Theodora, St., 173-174

Theodore of Pherme, St., 187, 190-191, 290-291, 298, 379

Theodore the Sanctified, St., 105-106, 202, 267

Theodosios the Cœnobiarch, St., 153-155, 163-164, 369-372

Theodosios the Younger (Emperor), St., 196

Theophilos, Archbishop of Alexandria, 195, 358

Index of Selected Subjects in Book III

Almsgiving, 360-383, 396-402
proper attitude of monastics towards, 384-395, 403-409

Asceticism, relaxation of for the sake of hospitality, 340-347

Attentiveness, 53-65, 69-80

Business ethics, for monastics, 325-330

Charity, reception of by monastics, 403-409

Cliques, in monasteries, danger of, 330-332

Commandments, 69-80

Condemnation, 1-8, 9-32

Conduct,
pleasing to God, cultivation of, 172-175, 176-178
pleasing to men, avoidance of, 172-175, 176-178, 179-194

Conscience, 48-50, 51-52

Conversation, avoidance of by monastics, 348-351

Craftiness, 42-44

Death, violent, 138-145

Dejection, 85-102

Denigration, 9-32, 45-47

Detachment, 410-413

Discretion, 228-241

Endurance, 103-112, 129-137, 146-152

Envy, 42-44

Everyday life, lessons to be drawn from, 38-41

Friendships, worldly, avoidance of by monastics, 195-200

Gifts, spiritual, 275-285

God, trust in, 153-164

Grace, Divine, 242-245

Guile, 42-44

Honesty, 325-330

Honor, human, avoidance of, 168-171, 176-178

Hope, imprudent, 165-167

Hospitality, 333-339

Humility, 275-285

Illness, 103-112, 113-117, 129-137, 146-152

Intentions, 48-50

Judging, 1-8, 9-32

Listlessness (*akedia*), 85-102

Love, 286-298, 299-305, 306-318, 319-324

Medical treatment, 113-117

Miracle-working, 275-285

Modesty, 118-126

Monastics, conduct of when visiting other monasteries, 355-359

Money, danger of for monastics, 384-395

Neighbor, love of, 286-298, 299-305, 306-318, 319-324

Patience, 85-102, 103-112, 129-137

People, worldly, interaction of monastics with, 352-354

Pride, 206-220, 275-285

Providence, Divine, 127-128, 153-164

Scandal, 33-37

Self-conceit, 201-205

Self-examination, 66-68

Self-reproach, 9-32

Simplicity, 42-44

Sins, minor, 69-80, 81-84

Suspicion, danger of, 1-8

Sycophancy, avoidance of, 195-200

Temptations, 246-262, 263-274

Thoughts, blasphemous, 221-227

Vainglory, 179-194

Vigilance, 53-65, 69-80

Virtues, 69-80

Virtuous persons, respect for, 45-47

Visitors, proper interaction of monastics with, 333-339, 348-351